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AN
Autumn Tour in Spain
IN THE YEAR 1859.

BY THE
Rev. Richard Roberts, B.A.,
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
VICAR OF MILTON ABBAS, DORSET.



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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF PORTARLINGTON,
IN MEMORY OF MANY HAPPY DAYS SPENT TOGETHER,
BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD,
DURING A FRIENDSHIP OF MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS,
THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

NOTICE.

THE Author takes the present opportunity of acknowledging his obligations to C. Clifford, Esq., 13, Calle de Las Infantas, Madrid, who, with great kindness and liberality, has permitted the use of his admirable Photographs to illustrate this Volume.

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ERRATA.

Page 106, line 7, *for its portraits read his portraits.*
 ,, 107, line 21, *for 16 read 116.*

AN
AUTUMN TOUR IN SPAIN.

CHAPTER I.

L EFT Paris on Monday morning, September 19th, 1859, at ten, arriving at Tours, where we proposed staying the night, soon after two. It is quite a pleasure to travel by any of the principal railways in France, so punctual and well-managed are they; and the brief halt of five or ten minutes, occurring every fifty or sixty miles, might be introduced with advantage on this side the Channel. With a long journey in prospect, it is worth a traveller's while to remember, that the Guards are quite open to conviction, when argument takes the form of a couple of francs, in consideration of which they will at once conduct him to a comfortable seat,

and he thus escapes detention in the crowded waiting-room, and the final scramble for places, when the doors leading to the platform are at length unlocked.

Much of the country along the Bordeaux line is very pretty, and scarcely a village is passed, that does not recall some historical incident; but the portion of the famed Touraine we traversed is sadly deficient in attraction for English eyes, being little else than a vast monotonous plain, which frequent inundations of the Loire have converted in many places into a desert of sand and *débris*. Several fine old chateaux came into sight from time to time, among which Chambord, Chaumont, and Amboise were most conspicuous, the hasty glimpses we caught of their high-pitched roofs, and sharply-defined gables, making us long for a nearer and more lengthened inspection.

I had always promised myself, in case I ever chanced to be at Tours, the gratification of visiting Plessis, the well-known scene of Quentin Durward's earlier adventures, and as it is not more than a mile and a half from the town, it seemed feasible enough. But there are few occasions when good intentions are more easily frustrated than upon a journey, and, from

various causes, I was unable to accomplish my little pilgrimage to Plessis les Tours, one of the myriad shrines consecrated by the genius of Scott.

Tours disappointed us, exhibiting, in consequence of modern improvements, very little of the antique quaintness of an old French city, which occupied so distinguished a position in mediæval history; nor did the cathedral, with its debased western *façade*, and bare, unadorned nave glaring with whitewash, harmonize with the associations called forth by a scene so famous in the annals of the Gallican Church, as the See of St. Martin and Gregory. The choir, however, contains some painted glass of exquisite beauty, which must have been in no slight peril at the Revolution, when the vast cathedral of St. Martin was destroyed. The Hôtel Gouin is a very pretty specimen of a Renaissance mansion, enriched with sculptured coats of arms, scroll-work, fruitage, and other characteristic ornaments, though its recent restoration, and the perfect freshness of the fine-grained stone, unrelieved by weather-stain and lichen, made it difficult to believe we were looking at a building of the sixteenth century. Several of the back streets and alleys contain exceedingly curious

old dwellings, of the rudest construction, in wood and stone, somewhat after the fashion of the black and white houses so common in Chester and Shrewsbury; one of them being a cobbler's abode, of such scanty dimensions, that, for aught I know to the contrary, it may be the identical stall immortalized in the well-known rhyme.

Just opposite the two towers, which alone remain to give the present generation some idea of the old cathedral's size and grandeur, I discovered a glorious hostelry, not mentioned by Murray, dating apparently from the thirteenth century. I never saw so perfect an example of a mediæval inn, which looks quite venerable in its dirt and untidiness, unaffected by the lapse of time; and as I stood inside the court-yard, with every external object shut out by the embattled gateway, save the majestic forms of the Tour de St. Martin and Tour de Charlemagne, I should hardly have been surprized had Quentin Durward, or his uncle, Le Balafré, ridden in at the head of a company of Scottish archers. Feeling very proud of this discovery, which I made in a ramble before breakfast, I took Lord Portarlington to see it in the course of the morning, and he was even more delighted with it than myself.

In no part of France, wherever either of us had any time been, east, west, north, or south, did we meet with such inveterate starers as the people of Tours, who, in other respects, do not appear to be as civilized as their central position and large intercourse with the world would lead one to expect. One individual, however, a waiter at one of the *cafés* near our hotel, must be excepted from this charge. From the moment of our arrival, he seemed to take us under his special protection, turning up continually on every emergency in the most mysterious manner, as if he possessed the faculty of divining our intentions, and knew exactly where we wanted to go. If we ever chanced to be in doubt as to our way, a circumstance that happened several times, he was instantly at hand, and, having set us right, vanished again, almost before we were aware of his presence. I fear he must have sadly neglected his customers that morning, though why he should take so unwearying an interest in our proceedings, and put himself to such trouble for our convenience, remains to this day as great a mystery to us, as his talent for appearing at critical moments. We became at last positively nervous about looking around us anywhere in his neighbourhood, for

fear of causing further trouble to our good-natured ally.

Our Hotel, L'Univers, by no means came up to Murray's recommendation, which classes it among the first in France, and we found there neither "the English conveniences" vaunted in the handbook, nor the pleasant spaciousness of the old-fashioned French inn.

Leaving Tours at two P.M. we reached Bordeaux soon after ten, after an agreeable journey, some portions of which, in the well-watered and richly-timbered pastures, reminded us of many an English landscape. Poictiers, from the beauty of its position, and the interesting churches and other buildings with which it is enriched, must be a charming place to stay at, had time permitted us—Nôtre Dame alone, with its glorious array of sculpture on the west front, being sufficient to repay a visit.

It was dark long before we entered Bordeaux, so that we missed the effect of a first impression, which may account for my being somewhat disappointed with the general appearance of the place. The bridge and quays are certainly magnificent; while the Garonne, then brimful with a turbid flood 2000 feet wide, presents a very different aspect from the Seine at Paris,

which looks sometimes as if it were all quay and no water.

The plan of the cathedral is unusual, having a nave 56 feet wide and nearly 200 feet long, without aisles. This circumstance, though in itself interesting, as another instance of the manifold elasticity and power of adaptation, so characteristic of pointed architecture, yet dwarfs the apparent elevation of the nave, and diminishes the general effect of the interior. The choir exhibits far more points of resemblance to English churches than I have generally noticed in France, a peculiarity accounted for by its erection during our possession of Bordeaux. The north transept is surmounted by two very elegant spires, each 150 feet high—the only example, it is said, of such an arrangement, in the whole of France. Our unfortunate Richard II., surnamed after the town, was baptized in this cathedral.

The various diligence offices here reminded us of our increasing proximity to Spain, by announcing conveyances to all parts of the Peninsula; while many a window, instead of the Parisian shopkeepers' stereotyped notice, "English spoken here," held out to the Spaniard a promise that within he might do business

through the medium of his own mother tongue. Lord Portarlington having some intention of taking a short run into Spain, we thought it advisable to get a copy of "Ford's Handbook" before leaving Bordeaux. Well indeed it was we did so, as that intention, which at the most scarcely contemplated even a hasty visit to Madrid, developed ultimately into a journey which extended from Bayonne to Gibraltar; through Madrid, Toledo, Plasencia, Seville, and Granada, the greater part of that distance being accomplished on horseback. That expedition forms the substance of the present publication; and if the narrative succeeds in imparting to the reader only a small portion of the enjoyment we derived from the scenes I have here attempted to describe, he will not, I hope, think his time altogether thrown away.

We left Bordeaux without regret, finding the climate damp and oppressive, and feeling anxious to reach our destination, Biarritz, without delay. The rail to Bayonne runs right through the Landes, which precisely resemble the extensive tract of unenclosed country at the back of Bournemouth, on the confines of Hampshire and Dorset, with the same soil, heath, and timber. Everything, however, is on a larger

scale, and the climate, of course, much warmer, the heat and dust making our *trajet* anything but agreeable. It was too provoking, that we did not see a single specimen of the shepherd on stilts, peculiar to this district, our only relief from the monotony of the scene being an occasional glimpse of some outlying point of the Pyrenees, which begin about midway to show their graceful forms, curving in purple folds gently down to the Atlantic.

Instead of going direct to Biarritz, we drove from the Bayonne station to the Hôtel de St. Martin, the very model of an old-fashioned French inn, standing in quiet and shady retirement within a spacious courtyard—its staircases, corridors, and apartments being all on a large airy scale, in pleasant contrast to the cramped dimensions of modern hotels, and imparting, in a southern climate, with the thermometer at 82 degrees indoors, such a delicious sense of coolness and repose.

I have seldom seen a town more to my mind than Bayonne, with its umbrageous trees along the principal thoroughfare, looking so cool and fresh that sultry afternoon; while the quaint old-world-like streets at the back, varied here and there by arcades not unlike those at Berne,

were quite a study. The left bank of the Adour, below the town, is planted with noble avenues, where you may enjoy shade, and the sea-breezes, as they come stealing up the river. Nor is the rest of the place devoid of attraction; the broad waters of the Nive and Adour, which here unite into one stream, being lined with handsome quays, and spanned by three bridges; and as we stood amid the motley-coloured crowd, which, in various costume, military, nautical, and provincial, was passing, with ceaseless flow, towards the suburbs, while the last rays of sunset were gleaming upon tower, housetop, and gable, we had before our eyes the elements of no ordinary picture.

A considerable portion of the population is Basque, this oldest of all European races (so say ethnologists) existing not only in Spain, where it extends over three provinces, but in a small district of France also, in the neighbourhood of Bayonne. Geography books describe the Basques as "a lively, industrious people, muscular and well-made, active in body, frank in manner, and passionate in character." As far as we had the opportunity of judging from two or three Basquaises, who waited on us at the hotel, they seem very good-natured and

obliging, having the countenance and complexion of the gipsy, with the pleasant manners of the Welsh peasantry.

Murray's "Handbook for France" informs its readers, that in these parts people used to ride *en cacolet*, though the practice has well nigh become obsolete. A wooden frame, containing seats for two, is placed pannier-fashion across the back of a horse, so that the weight of each rider is balanced by that of his co-equestrian. The chief difficulty of this mode of conveyance occurs at the beginning and end of a ride; for if either party mounts or dismounts one moment before the other, a capsize is the inevitable consequence; and as one of the pair—the conductor—is usually a stout countrywoman, the absurdity of such an incident may be conceived. Now-a-days, few, except peasants and market people, adopt this means of locomotion, though the day is not yet forgotten in the neighbourhood, when the Duchesse de Berri used to ride *en cacolet*.

Our destination being Biarritz, where this conveyance was most in vogue, we felt bound, as travellers of an inquiring turn of mind, to investigate so peculiar a department of "the manners and customs" of the Basques, and for

that purpose asked the waiting-women a number of questions pertinent to the subject. But the very sound of the words "*en cacolet*," so suggestive of cachinnation, seemed to excite their risible faculties to such a degree, and set them off into such fits of laughter, that we never succeeded in obtaining any coherent information, and were obliged to content ourselves with the sober-minded lucubrations of Murray.

Scarcely are the environs of Bayonne cleared, before you enter upon a desolate tract of barren heath and sand, extending most of the way to Biarritz, the monotony of the landscape being relieved, however, by the magnificent outline of the opposite coast of the Asturias, where the verdant slopes and craggy peaks of the Pyrenees rise abruptly out of the western waves. Nothing can exceed the boldness and freedom of the sea view, which stretches out into illimitable expanse over the broad bosom of the Atlantic. A few years ago those five miles between Bayonne and Biarritz must have been a walk of rare beauty, increasing in interest at every step, until at last the whole line of coast lies extended at your feet, with its lava-coloured rocks, running out to meet the huge waves, which, having traversed an entire ocean, surge

grandly in, to whiten with their foam the manifold caverns they have been scooping out along the shore ever since time began.

But now the swarms of smart carriages, and crowded omnibuses, which the sunshine of Imperial favour has called forth into a summer existence, give the neighbourhood quite a suburban character, and instead of gazing at the view, you begin to speculate whether that gaily-dressed crowd, disporting itself in all directions, has left in lodging-house and hotel any place for new comers to put their heads in.

Though night had not yet fallen, long lines of blazing light were streaming with exquisite effect across the sea from the windows of the Villa Eugénie, which stood out one mass of radiance as we drove into Biarritz, being illuminated from roof to base; in honour of the King of the Belgians, who dined that evening with the Emperor, and wearing, for the moment, the aspect of some fairy palace, instead of that commonplace, naked appearance, it exhibits in the daytime.

Rooms had been ordered several days before at the Hôtel de France, but on going to claim them, we found every corner crammed, and were transferred by the landlord to a new

establishment, Hôtel d'Angleterre, in a very good situation, where we hoped to enjoy a little rest after our long journey, and as much of the sea-breeze as would render more tolerable the excessive heat, which now, at the end of September, surpassed the warmth of the dog days.

Next morning dawned brighter and hotter than ever, the atmosphere being in the condition of a dry vapour bath, while a wind from the south-west not only brought with it the enervating influences of the sirocco, making exertion a mere misery, but veiled the whole landscape with a dim haze that effectually marred all the grace and clearness of its outlines. By ten o'clock the sun was so powerful, that gentlemen were walking about with umbrellas, and Lord Portarlington remarked, that his aneroid never indicated so heavy a pressure of air, in any country where he has taken it, as at Biarritz, the index standing above "very dry," a point it never reached even in rainless Egypt.

It was a great disappointment to find so much heat and oppressiveness at that late period of the season, all accounts we had received of Biarritz having represented its climate as fresh and bracing, while we found it more relaxing than even Torquay. We were

not then aware that the same high temperature and weight of atmosphere prevailed at the moment over the greater part of France and England. It was decided, in consequence, that we should stay no longer than Monday, having arrived there on Friday, and after a short expedition into the Pyrenees, we were then to go on to Madrid. This change of plan delighted me, as I was never likely to have another opportunity of seeing so peculiar and little-travelled a country as Spain.

CHAPTER II.

THIS weighty matter decided, we walked down to see the bathers, many of whom take their dip on the open shore in front of the town, the operation being in that quarter very much of the same nature as at most other watering-places.

But if any one wishes to see a bath of an entirely novel description, let him go with us to the other side of the town, where he will witness a most amusing spectacle. Let the reader figure to himself a deep, narrow cove, walled on each side by cliffs, and protected at its seaward extremity by a rocky islet, that does duty for a breakwater, while the upper end is encircled with long rows of wooden bathing houses. Between these and the sea, a bevy of ladies, *en grande toilette*, is sitting under the pleasant shade of impending rocks. Your first glance prompts you to say, "Oh! what a charming

spot for a quiet bathe!" but you have hardly uttered the words before you discover, that, in spite of all its apparent advantages of situation, it has little power to keep out the terrific rush of an Atlantic wave, which even when broken on the beach retains force enough to knock down a powerful man.

A tremendous sea is rolling in, the waves of any length and depth, and as they are suddenly compressed into that narrow space, they break against the rocky sides of the cove with the noise of thunder, scattering showers of spray and foam high into the air. In the midst of this seething whirlpool, you catch a glimpse of heads dotted about here and there, now rising on a summit of a huge mountain-wave, now suddenly disappearing behind a wall of waters, in the most imminent peril (apparently) of being dashed to pieces every moment. It quite takes away your breath to look at them, as they are tossed to and fro in impotent helplessness in the midst of that foaming flood. "Surely," you think, "these must be some poor creatures struggling ashore from a foundered ship." Not a bit of it; all of them, men, women, and children together, have gone in of their own free will, and in spite of your

trepidation on their behalf, which makes you look at them with quickened pulse, and "bated breath," every one is highly delighted at his situation, and if you will only wait a while, you will soon see some more venturing in "to take up arms against that sea of troubles."

The chair beside you has suddenly lost its occupant, the best-dressed unit in all that group of fashionably-attired women. In a few minutes a dressing-room door opens, and out steps a funny Laplander-like little "party" in frock coat and trowsers, to whose waist a bathing-man first attaches a pair of gourds, which not only make her more manageable in the water, but impart besides a touch of the pilgrim to a figure grotesque enough already, and then he upsets a pailful of "the briny flood" over her head. She is now fitted out for sea, and trusting to her floats, and stalwart arm of the bathing man, in she goes, to increase the number of black dots bobbing up and down like corks upon the yeasty surges, and the last you see of the newly-launched pair is high among the foam-beads of a tremendous swell, behind whose crest they are suddenly engulfed, to turn up again on the first opportunity in some other part of the cove.

To prevent accidents from the extreme force of the under-current, as the waves retire, a rope is drawn across the lower end of the cove, and beyond this point no one seemed to venture.

The worst part of the whole business is, that both in going and returning the bathers have to cross a disagreeable strip of sand, and shingle, passing within a few feet of the spectators, who, having nothing to do, are naturally disposed to be critical.

Altogether it formed a most amusing scene, rather too public for English taste, though we observed, from time to time, several of our country-women, who just before had been sitting among the lookers-on, reappear, after a short absence, so effectually disguised under the transformation of a bathing-dress, that their nearest relations would have failed to recognize them, as they stepped into the water.*

I never on any shore saw such beautiful breakers, as at Biarritz. The rocks, which in form and colour very closely resemble those lying off the Channel Islands, run out some

* Having taken no notes while at Biarritz, I am indebted for many particulars in this description to the kindness of the same good friend, to whom I owed the opportunity of visiting the scene.

distance into the sea, so as to receive the full shock of every wave, which, breaking into foam, falls like a veil of white lace flung suddenly upon some dark surface, and as suddenly withdrawn, to be followed by wave after wave, repeating the same effect in ever-recurring succession.

Sometimes you are tempted to wish the sea were not quite so lively, as you scramble among the craggy paths leading to the various islets, with which the shore is strewn. An enormous wave comes rolling in, thirty feet below the rock, on which you have perched yourself for the better contemplation of the scene; and while you are admiring that glorious rush of water so instinct with life and force, and wondering how any poor shipwrecked mariner could ever escape on such a coast, all of a sudden an inverted shower-bath dashes upwards in your face, bringing your meditations to an untimely end, and teaching you for the future to give a wider berth to the range of an Atlantic wave.

Having never seen either Emperor, or Empress, I was anxious to catch a glimpse of such remarkable personages; and as they very good-naturedly seem to make a point of appearing often in public, my wishes were soon gratified. A band played every fine evening in front of the Imperial

Villa, and at this hour the Emperor generally walked among the crowd, attended by one or two gentlemen of his suite, and accompanied frequently by the little Prince. One evening the Court sat out near the extremity of the grounds, a slight wire fence being the only separation between the Imperial party and the hundreds, who were promenading the beach ; and as they remained on this spot at least an hour, I enjoyed abundant opportunity of gratifying my curiosity, the Emperor, Empress, and little Prince forming a group within twenty yards of the general crowd. His countenance exhibits little indication of intellect, while his lack-lustre, leaden eye, and thickset heavy figure, appear altogether out of harmony with the real self of that mysterious being, who, from a fugitive adventurer, has become the wonder of the age. If the words of an old song can be applied to so august a person as an Emperor, it may be said of him, that his face is his fortune, veiling, as it does, so effectually the workings of the inner man. When we saw him at Biarritz, he had not long returned from his Italian campaign, with a *prestige* augmented beyond the wildest dreams of ambition ; yet in his quiet unassuming demeanour not a trace of exultation,

or self-complacency, could be detected; so that if he does not possess all the genius of the first Napoleon, he is at any rate perfectly free from every particle of his intense vulgarity.

The Empress was dressed with extreme plainness, and in a colour, fawn, which scarcely did justice to her delicate complexion. Her beauty is unquestionable, though with her face in repose, and fatigued apparently at the time I saw her, she could not have appeared to the same advantage as in her more-animated moments, when her countenance is lighted up with conversation. She has all the high-bred look and air, that might be expected in one descended from some of the best blood, in two of the most pedigree-worshipping countries in Europe—Spain and Scotland.

More than two months afterwards, while riding between Granada and Ronda, we passed under Teba, the high-perched mountain-town, which gives her the title of Countess, and it struck me as a bleak spot indeed to enjoy the privilege of giving “a local habitation and a name” to a flower of such rare loveliness.

The little Prince delighted us, being one of the most intelligent, and perfectly-natural boys I ever saw, with large lustrous eyes, full of child-

like wonderment. He seems to be brought up most judiciously, under the charge of an English nurse, and some one told us, that his great pleasure is to ride his donkey up and down in front of the regiment, to which he belongs, and when he has finished his inspection, he gives the word of command to turn in, "*Rentrez*," in soldier-like style.

One could not look at that innocent, beaming face, without longing to divine the fortunes of his life. Had he lived a few centuries ago, how often would his nativity have been cast, how anxiously his horoscope studied!

The landlord of the principal hotel having kindly permitted the use of his *salle-à-manger* to the British Chaplain at Biarritz during the season, a goodly number of our compatriots assembled there on Sunday, September 25, at 11.30, which appears to be the earliest hour at which English congregations abroad can be induced to commence their matins. It is always a great comfort to have our Church-service held under any circumstances abroad, the well-remembered words of our Common Prayer-Book having, to persons away from home, an increased expressiveness, which recalls many a devout thought, and exercises a very wholesome in-

fluence amid the excitements of travel. But the dining-room of a crowded hotel, with bells, that did not call to prayer, ringing on all sides, and a crowd of peasants chattering patois under the open windows, was hardly the scene either to invite, or sustain devotion; while to myself it presented a most painful contrast to the services we had attended the previous Sunday, at Mr. Archer Gurney's Chapel in Paris, where the worship of the Church of England is celebrated with all solemnity and reverence. By this time, however, English visitors at Biarritz enjoy the advantage of a regular chapel, built since last year, expressly for their accommodation.

Biarritz continued so hot and oppressive, that we were very glad to leave on Monday morning, taking Bayonne on our way to Pau, from whence it was settled that we should make a short excursion among the Pyrenees. A carriage had to be engaged, and we were recommended to apply for that purpose to the Postmaster, whose establishment is in the upper town, near the Cathedral. He proved to be quite a character, and as arrangements had to be made with him for the Madrid journey also, we enjoyed ample opportunity for observing his numerous peculiarities. He had spent some years a prisoner in England,

having been taken in a French man-of-war, on board which he held a commission. By some mistake he was set down as a common sailor, and confined accordingly in Porchester Castle; but through the representations of a King's messenger, who had known his family for years, he was liberated on parole as an officer, in acknowledgment of valuable services rendered by his family (several members of which were couriers) to English messengers abroad. From Porchester Castle he was sent first to Odiham in Hampshire, a place he described in rapturous terms, and thence passed on to Newtown, Montgomeryshire, of which and its inhabitants he gave a very different account, using in his description many terms, that had their origin neither in heaven nor in earth.

He was, by many degrees, the most emphatic being I ever met with, and such his versatility, and dramatic expression, that an interview with him was as good as a play, in which he supported a variety of characters, becoming everything by turns. Sometimes his mood was indignation, while he enlarged upon Spanish indolence, and mismanagement. Sometimes he gave utterance to a tone of severest irony, as when replying to any expression of doubt on

our part respecting the solidity and general excellence of his carriages. Occasionally his oratory assumed the vehemence of a tornado, his gesture and action being at all times superabundant; and when at the end of an impassioned sentence, by way of producing a climax of emphasis, he threw in a few morsels of broken English, rasping them between his teeth with a fierceness that made one shudder, the effect was indescribable.

Being gifted with a most fertile imagination, he exercised it in the nomenclature of his carriages, eighteen of which, like the knights and steeds at Branksome Hall, stand ready for all occasions within his spacious premises; the favourite vehicle being the Marquise, on which he exhausts his vocabulary of laudation. The Coquette, an enormous yellow barouche, well known on the Madrid road, was selected for our journey into Spain, not so much on account of its air of ponderous stateliness, that harmonized perfectly with Spanish ways, but for its superior capacity for carrying luggage. When all these arrangements were completed, it was high time to start for Pau, a distance of about sixty-five miles from Bayonne. French posting is generally excellent, horses and roads

being superior, and we had very civil postilions, who took us along at a capital pace, and in such fine weather, amid beautiful scenery, the mere motion was a pleasure. Recent thunderstorms had effectually laid the dust, and the heat, though it baked us, whenever we stopped, became tolerable as soon as we set off again.

The situation of Pau, which we reached soon after sunset, is extremely pleasing, bearing about the same relation in the scale of picturesque effect to the position of Berne, that the Pyrenees do to the Alps. Several points of resemblance between them may be noted, each having its river, terrace, and panorama of mountains; but here all comparison ceases. For the view from Pau commands none of those sublime forms, and snow-clad summits, which make the prospect from the platform at Berne a spectacle of such surpassing grandeur; the comparative absence of snow constituting, in my opinion, a fatal defect in the Pyrenees, and, when we gazed at them from the shady avenues of the Place Royale on the 29th of September, hardly a capful of that essential element in an Alpine landscape was visible throughout the whole range.

We left next morning for Cauterets, skirting

for the greater part of the way one of the loveliest streams I ever beheld, the Gave de Pau. It is very like the Dee at Llangollen, only twice as large, with an ivy-covered bridge at Lestelle, rivalling Inigo Jones' arch at Mallwydd, so well known to artists and tourists in Wales. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this drive. It combines the freshness of an Alpine region, with the varied and luxuriant vegetation of a southern climate, and reveals at every turn some sparkling ford, or tranquil reach, of the river; while the rugged mountain-line, broken by many a peak and pyramid, bounds one of the finest landscapes in the whole extent of the Pyrenees.

It was dark long before we arrived at Cauterets. The season being over, it looked desolate and deserted, as we rode through next morning on our way to the Lac de Gaube, which, though a mere mountain-tarn, not three miles in circumference, is the largest piece of water in the district. It is a charming excursion, many portions of the road reminding me of the neighbourhood of the Grande Chartreuse. For a time our course lay through gorges glowing with the brightest hues of lichen and moss, with often scarcely space for the thundering torrent on the one hand, and the bridle-road

on the other ; while every successive ledge of rock traversed by the ascending pathway had its cascade of bright green water, over which the swallows were dashing to and fro in ceaseless flight, waiting, as the guide told us, for a clear day to cross the frontier into Spain, a passage they will not venture upon during a fog, which at the moment was hanging in heavy wreaths upon the mountain-tops. Neither fog however, nor cloudy sky, could rob the little lake of its deep, dark blue, though its waters no longer reflected the peaks and glaciers of the Vigne-male, the highest mountain on the French side, which rises abruptly from the eastern shore to an elevation of 11,000 feet.

In summer this must be the very place for spending a long day ; but on the 28th of September its situation, 5866 feet above the sea-level, and the total absence of sunshine, restricted our visit to the period necessary for feeding the horses. In descending, we turned aside across the Pont d'Espagne, to see the junction of two streams which leap down a rocky chasm in twin cascades of singular purity, and brightness, though of no great volume. It is a spot of wonderful beauty, in the midst of a venerable pine forest, festooned with grey

lichen, while towering peaks and weather-beaten precipices of granite form an irregular amphitheatre, bounding the view on every side. Such a scene one would imagine to be hallowed by its own loveliness against the approach of everything sordid or worldly,—when, in the midst of our enjoyment, out pounced some peasants from a small wooden cabin, and, in no courteous terms, demanded five or six *sous* for each horse, by way of toll for crossing the bridge; the very beauty of the place being thus farmed out as a profitable speculation. This made us very wroth, as there would be no difficulty in collecting the toll, without putting to flight at the same time every feeling of enjoyment, by so harsh an intrusion upon the solitude, and grandeur of nature.

As this excursion took up only five or six hours, we were able, in the afternoon, to post to Luz; and now that we had really penetrated the inner recesses of the Pyrenees, we began to realize their peculiar attractions, and in their magnificent defiles, walled-in with rocks of every form and hue—their varied foliage and vegetation—constant alternation of light and shade, even in the full glare of the brightest sunshine, simply from natural formation—transparent

clearness of the water, unsullied by the defilements of the glacier-streams,—in all these respects we soon discovered that the Pyrenees have a charm of their own, which assigns them a higher position in the regions of the picturesque, than they could ever claim merely as mountains.

Luz being a central point for making excursions, we stayed there three nights, finding Madame Cazaux's hotel most comfortable, and going from thence first to the Cirque de Gavarnie, and the day after to the summit of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre. The road to Gavarnie abounds in glorious scenery, threading for miles the folds of a defile, where the Gave de Pau, cleaving its way through perpendicular rocks, two or three hundred feet high, divides mountains clothed with every variety of timber, from the forest tree to the box, which presented at the moment a superb mass of autumnal colouring. Some bridges, too, at intervals, leaping boldly across the ravine, far above the foaming torrent, form perfect pictures.

It was well for us that the interest of our excursion did not depend solely upon its principal object—the Cirque de Gavarnie—an enormous circular basin scooped out of the heart of

the mountains, which, running up here into vast cliffs, enclose one of the most remarkable spots I ever visited, even though the fog, which still haunted us, by concealing the summit of the rocks, marred the peculiar aspect of the Cirque. We were obliged to take for granted the Breche de Roland, a fissure 350 feet high, by 300 wide, notched in the crown of the enclosing rampart, like the embrasure of a battlement, the fog making it invisible. An air of sternest desolation, deepened by the gloom of a sunless sky, and overhanging mist, reigned around; while nothing could be seen but frowning precipices, streaked by many a waterfall (which seemed, as we saw them, to descend direct from the clouds), and the rock-strewn floor of that wild amphitheatre, where the roaring torrent and thundering avalanche find a meet stage for enacting their tumultuous sport.

The whole scene somewhat reminded me of points in the Stralheck, as I crossed it during similar weather in August, 1848; nor is it devoid of resemblance to that secluded Æschinen lake, imbedded at the foot of the Blumlis Alp, having this feature in common with the latter, that its basin was, no doubt, once filled with water.

Our ascent of the Pic du Midi was a perfect

success, the day being everything we could wish, without a particle of cloud, or fog. It is a very easy excursion, as we made it, riding within a short distance of the summit, 9553 feet above the sea, though it is certainly man's indolence, rather than nature's intention, that urges any quadruped, except a goat or an izzard (the chamois of the Pyrenees), over such ground. I felt a good deal ashamed of doing so, but finally justified myself with the consideration, that, for so brief a space as we were going to spend among the mountains, it was hardly worth while to get into walking-trim.

After passing the Cabin, where people spend the night before going up to see the sunrise, the path becomes a mere ledge, not more than a yard wide, cut out of the side of the mountain, which, out of a lake of most uncomfortable look, and untold depth, rises a sheer precipice of about 2000 feet, unfenced throughout its whole extent by the least protection of rail, or wall, as even a rampart of adamant could not withstand the irresistible rush of the avalanches, which, at certain seasons of the year, sweep continually over those bleak slopes. There are many places in the ascent, where riding is by no means safe or pleasant, for a single false step would very

soon plunge you into the Lac d'Oncet, and a tablet erected at a turn of the path, to record the marvellous escape of a German tourist, reminds you, if you are not already aware of the circumstance, that even Pyrenean horses have their moments of weakness, and should not be too implicitly trusted. How the poor creatures ever managed to carry us up that tremendous steep I cannot imagine, though we fully appreciated their services long before we reached the summit, where the view that suddenly burst upon us repaid ten thousandfold our modicum of toil.

The whole range of the Pyrenees, from east to west, lay spread out before us like a raised map, giving us in half an hour a far clearer idea of the region, than a month's course of Murray. The view was perfection. The nearer ranges with their graceful slopes, here olive-green with herbage, there, russet with fern (a special ornament of the Pyrenees), crowned with a rampart of broken rocks (over one of which we espied two eagles on the wing), stood out sharp as steel, the whole landscape being suffused with an exquisite tinge of mellow colouring; while at a greater distance, the monarchs of the range, Vigne-male, Mount Perdu, and Maladetta, the

two latter being in Spain, towered above all in unapproached supereminence. On the side of France, sleeping in chequered sunshine, an unbroken plain stretched out, dotted with many a town and village. Had the heat of the day been less glowing, we should have seen Toulouse. We now commanded a cloudless view of the precipices that hem in the Cirque de Gavarnie, the summit of which the fog had concealed from us as we stood under them yesterday, and the Breche de Roland lifted itself against the clear blue sky, a clean workman-like cut, that did the Paladin's arm, and Durandel's temper, equal credit.

The descent was a tedious affair, and it was dark ere we reached Luz, with the feeling of having enjoyed a most charming day, which had thoroughly satisfied all my Pyrenean aspirations.

Before leaving, we went to see the old church of the Templars, a most interesting building, not so well known, apparently, as it deserves to be from its ecclesiological value; and having spent Sunday at Pau, we returned to Bayonne on Monday evening, October 3, being welcomed with much kindness by the attentive host and good-natured people of the Hôtel de St. Martin.

CHAPTER III.

WE had fully intended setting out for Madrid next day, but so many preparations were necessary before venturing into so unfurnished a country as Spain, that we were compelled to spend another night at Bayonne. Many were the inquiries we made respecting inns, and the various circumstances of our route, from the landlord, who had been as far as Madrid. He gave us anything but a cheerful report, and evidently regarded our expedition into that hungry land, as a melancholy proof of the ingrained perversity of human nature, which, not content with the comforts of his good hotel, must needs wander forth from a soil where dinners are an indigenous production, and go among a people destitute of the most elementary principles of cooking. His *amour propre*, and patriotic feelings were alike wounded, and he conscientiously warned us, that we must not expect *to dine*,

(at least in the French sense of the term), anywhere between his house and Madrid, while his good-nature prompted him to serve us such a dinner (being his own chef), on the eve of our departure, as would fully acquit him of all complicity, in case we starved on the road.

On referring to my note-book, I find certain entries, which indicate a determination on our part, not to perish at any rate without a struggle. Among these, two hams (an article for which Bayonne is celebrated), a frying-pan, and a Rochefort cheese (this last comestible being a condescension to my national weakness, as a Welshman), form the most conspicuous items. I remember, besides, that a pound of tea, with more than one packet of flea-powder, were purchased at a very good chemist's shop in one of the back streets, while at the landlord's suggestion, several bottles of his best Bordeaux were added to our stores. All this preparation, not only occupied our time, but served to calm down the apprehensions, which the prospect of starvation had not unnaturally excited, and we now began to consider ourselves justified in looking forward, with some degree of hopefulness, to seeing home and friends once more.

Our acquaintance with Spanish being of the

most limited description, it became necessary to find some interpreting medium between the natives and ourselves, and as no courier happened to be available at the moment, in spite of every exertion on the part of Captain Graham, the British Consul at Bayonne, an amphibious being, named Pierre Cambour, whose ostensible means of subsistence oscillated between the river and the road, he being sometimes a fisherman, sometimes a sort of *quasi-courier*, was engaged in that capacity, having frequently made the journey to Madrid, in the service of our Queen's messengers.

Although our passport had been regularly signed at the Embassy in London, we found it must be viséd at Bayonne, before we should be allowed to enter the dominions of Queen Isabella, a requirement that was quite incomprehensible, until we had been to the office of the Spanish Consul. For in reply to Lord Portarlington's inquiry, how it came to pass, that a passport bearing the signature of an ambassador was not sufficient to admit us into the country represented by him, contrary to general practice on the Continent, that functionary retorted with some asperity, "Oh! but you must pay me three francs, nevertheless," a reply which seemed to

strike the key-note of our experiences of the national character, and confirmed with ludicrous exactness the great Duke's observation, "The first thing the Spaniards invariably want is money."

It threatened to be a more serious business than we had ever contemplated, to take the old Coquette over the frontier, the only method of avoiding the heavy duty levied on all carriages entering Spain, being either the deposit of a considerable sum, £30 or £40, at the Custom House, to be refunded on the return of the carriage, or an equivalent arrangement, which Captain Graham most kindly undertook for Lord Portarlington, by becoming himself responsible for the amount.

The weather being still excessively hot, and oppressive, it was such a refreshment, when all our preparations had been completed, to spend half an hour in the cathedral, which, internally is most interesting, and well worthy a more careful examination, than we were able to give it. We were not, then, aware that its cloisters are some of the finest in France, or we should certainly have contrived to catch a glimpse of them. In returning to the Hotel, we went to see our friend the Postmaster, who was highly gratified to find, that the carriage he had supplied

for our expedition to the Pyrenees had given every satisfaction, and, with his wonted animation and emphasis, accompanied by much smiting of his bosom, he assured us he was *un homme de confiance*, in whom no one would ever find cause for disappointment, an assurance which the event perfectly verified in our own case.

The landlord told us a touching story of a poor woman of Bayonne, who had died two years before. In one of the numerous engagements, that took place in the neighbourhood, during the Duke's advance across the French frontier, an English officer was dangerously wounded, and carried into the town, where, after the lapse of some months, he died. He had been nursed to the last by a young woman of the place, and from the time of his death in 1814 to 1857, when her own decease occurred, she never omitted going daily to his grave in the Cimetière Anglais, (a spot some little distance from the town, where the remains of many British soldiers are interred), to pray, according to the Roman Catholic practice, for the repose of his soul. For a considerable time she was afflicted with insanity, but that made no difference; the poor faithful creature still made her daily pilgrimage, and continued the loving custom down to the very end of her days.

CHAPTER IV.

OCTOBER 5th.—A very agreeable change of temperature took place during the night, and a fresh breeze from the Bay of Biscay breathed new life into our limbs, after the enervating heats of the last fortnight, when the thermometer had rarely stood below 85° in the shade. A few showers too, had fallen, laying the dust opportunely for our journey into one of the driest, and dustiest countries in Europe. When at length, after an infinity of contrivance, and stuffing, the *Coquette* had absorbed her miscellaneous cargo, the whole household turned out to see us off, and we parted from those kind-hearted people, with as many adieux and benedictions, as would have served for a voyage round the globe.

Bidart, St. Jean de Luz, Urugne, were quickly passed, and before noon we had crossed the Bidassoa, and entered Spain. The moment we

touched Queen Isabella's territory, a sentry stopped us, who, by the antique cut of his uniform, might have fought at Culloden; his nether man being encased in black overalls, of precisely the same pattern as those, in which our countrymen used to fight the French, in the days of General Ligonier, and the Marquis of Granby.

Below the bridge, in the middle of the river, lies the celebrated Isle des Faisans, the most deplorable-looking strip of mud ever honoured with so imaginative a title. Yet that insignificant patch of dirt, being neutral ground between France and Spain, has been the stage on which important events have been acted, leaving their "form and pressure" on the general history of Europe. Here it was, that in 1463, Louis XI. had an interview with Enrique IV. Here again, in 1615, the two kingdoms exchanged brides, Isabella, daughter of Henri Quatre, going into Spain, to be the wife of Philip IV., while his sister, Anne of Austria, found her husband in Louis XIII. Forty-five years later, the same spot witnessed another interview of high import, when Cardinal Mazarin, and the Spanish Minister, Don Louis de Haro, brought the long wars between France and Spain,

to a close by the treaty of the Bidassoa, and the marriage between Louis XIV. and his first cousin, Maria Theresa; an event which in time led to the occupation of the Spanish throne by the Bourbon Philip V.

A melancholy interest attaches to this last occasion, as it is supposed to have caused the death of Velasquez, who, in his capacity of Aposentador Mayor to Philip IV., had to fit up the royal pavilion, erected on the Isle des Faisans. His death, which took place on the 7th of August, 1660, only a few days after his return to Madrid, was caused, some say, by a fever, others, by excessive fatigue; his broken-hearted wife following him to the grave before the end of another week.

This slight *excursus* into the domain of Spanish history, having given time to the authorities to investigate the contents of our passport, that indispensable document is restored to us. We are once more in motion, and soon find ourselves drawn up on a hill-side, in front of the Custom House at Irun. As there happened to be no diligence, or any other carriage under examination at the moment, our business was speedily despatched, the officials being very civil and expeditious, exhibiting withal far more consideration for the interior arrangement of portmanteaux, and dressing-cases, than is common to

their class. With a fresh team, we were again on the road, skirting two sides of the harbour of Passages, a lake of salt water, more landlocked than even Lulworth cove, and opening to the sea by an outlet, which would hardly admit the *Great Eastern*. Crossing the Urumea, which more than once has been dyed with English blood, and passing under a drawbridge, we entered the Plaza of San Sebastian, a most uninviting, dirty-looking place, with a fishy population, addicted to contemplative, do-nothing habits.

The scenery now became highly picturesque, and we passed through a succession of pastoral valleys, green as emerald, in their bright autumnal herbage, and watered by such tempting trout-streams, that meandered between swelling hills, over which copse-wood of oak, chestnut, and hazel, spread their umbrageous mantle; while animated nature was abundantly represented by long files of magnificent mules (many of them being fully sixteen hands high), six to a cart, drivers with bright sashes, and swart unwashed visages, and many other accessories of the road. After the dusty highways of France, it was quite a pleasure to be travelling through a country, where rain had recently fallen, while the novelty of finding ourselves actually in Spain, clear of

frontier difficulties, and douaniers, imparted a peculiar enjoyment to this day's journey.

Our resting-place for the night was Tolosa, where we arrived in good time, about five, putting up at an inn near the bridge, Parador Nuevo, which, according to the Spanish fashion, had its entrance side by side with the stable, the latter occupying the ground-floor, while we had to mount to the third story, which contains the best rooms. This being our first experience of a Spanish inn, we were agreeably surprised to find matters more promising, than we could have anticipated, everything looking clean and comfortable, the stuffy closeness of the rooms being soon remedied by a general opening of windows.

Tolosa, in spite of its being the principal town of the province Giupuscoa, is a poky, dingy little town, dismally situated in a deep valley, frowned upon by two mountains, Ernio and Loaza, and the rain, which soon after our arrival poured down in torrents, did not improve its appearance. The neighbourhood seems well cultivated and fertile, the whole breadth of the market-place being studded with piles of enormous vegetables; among which, red-pepper-pods, gourds, melons, and black grapes, looked quite attractive.

We just glanced into the principal church,

a spacious classical building, lighted up by a single lamp, which gave it a solemn mysterious air in the deepening twilight. At the door lay the tiniest mendicant I ever saw, a pale-faced, sickly child, stretched out upon the cold flags of the porch, with a pair of diminutive crutches at his side, his countenance wearing a singularly touching expression, such as I have sometimes noticed in a corbel-head, or quaint old mask, in church and cloister.

To-day we had our first taste of Spanish cookery, and fared much better than we had anticipated; the various dishes, that composed our dinner, being perfectly free from garlic, oil, saffron, and other abominations, native to the Peninsula. The principal dish was, as usual, the puchero or stew, and its chief ingredients, bacon, beef, fowl, according to the state of the larder, which were cooked in one mess with chick-peas, cabbages, carrots, gourd, long-peppers, a sausage or two being thrown in by way of make-weight. Spanish soup bears a greater resemblance to what the Dorsetshire peasant calls tea-kettle broth (that is, boiling water poured upon slices of bread, and then flavoured with a lump of butter, and the usual seasoning), than any other compound I have ever eaten, the tureen being

nearly choked up by layers of bread, over which floats a very thin liquid, dotted here, and there with islets of grease. It possesses, however, the negative recommendation of being perfectly unobjectionable, and if it fails to excite your appetite, it fails equally to offend your taste, which is more than can be said for those dreadful chick-peas, *garbanzos*, the universal vegetable of the Peninsula. They are about the size of horse-beans, and quite as unappetizing to human beings, not "to the manner born," being about as hard, flavourless, and indigestible as bullets. It was after a meal composed chiefly of this esculent, that a Frenchman compared himself, while jolted along in the diligence, to a child's drum filled with peas, as his dinner rattled up and down his half-empty stomach.

All one's ideas of order and precedence are upset by the courses of a Spanish dinner, and when you have partaken of several kinds of meat, two or three dishes of fish suddenly make their appearance, which at an earlier moment would have received a hearty welcome.

Pork, in its various phases, bacon, ham, and sausage, is the meat *par excellence* of Spain, occupying the same elevated position in the department of gastronomy, as English beef, Welsh

mutton, and Irish potatoes. Judging from the Continent generally, an Englishman is apt to fancy that a rasher is a delicacy confined to the British Isles, but, before he has been long in Spain, he will discover the truth of Ford's statement, "The pork of Spain has always been unequalled in flavour. The bacon is fat and well-flavoured; the sausages delicious, and the hams transcendently superlative, to use the very expression of Diodorus Siculus, a man of great taste, learning, and judgment. Of all the things of Spain, no one need feel ashamed to plead guilty to a predilection and preference for the pig." For ourselves, I can only add, that this worthy animal, whose merits are never acknowledged, until he is dead, has laid us under the profoundest obligations; but for him, we should unquestionably have been starved, when we advanced further into the country, while riding through the aromatic solitudes of Estramadura, and the mountain valleys of romantic Andalusia.

The Spaniards are great people for sweets, *dulces*, and a pot of preserved green-gages, and other fruits in the north, and in the south, a mould of quince jelly seems to form an indispensable complement to the dinner-table.

We had excellent beds at Tolosa, perfectly

free from those little creatures that murder sleep; and this, though quite contrary to our expectations, and the ideas generally afloat respecting Spanish inns, was our almost universal experience in all parts of the country, from Bayonne to Gibraltar.

A railway is in course of construction between Madrid and Irun, portions of it in this neighbourhood being considerably advanced; and this morning, as I was dressing, the whole populace was in a state of excitement at the sight of a locomotive, which passed through the town drawn by a team of twenty-four oxen, and attended by all the idle boys and girls of the place, uttering cries of childish delight and astonishment.

The population of this neighbourhood has nothing Spanish in its physiognomy or expression; indeed, I could pick out of a Dorsetshire village many more effective representatives of the Don, than we saw anywhere from Irun to Vittoria. Guipuscoa is one of the three Basque provinces, and its inhabitants still exhibit that comparative fairness of complexion, which they have inherited from some sea-king, who once upon a time made a descent, and then a permanent settlement, upon these coasts. They do not exactly shine in costume, and their hats exceed

in general dilapidation any worn by the *boys* of Tipperary, whom they further resemble in the use of brogues made of skins, and tied with thongs, which, if they let in the mud and water of this rainy district, possess at any rate the compensating advantage of letting them out again.

The Basques appear to be the butts of the Peninsula, and many are the jokes made at their expense, on account of their pride, language, and pronunciation. As they are the descendants of the oldest occupiers of Spain, untainted by any intermixture of Moorish blood, every man, however poor, considers himself a gentleman. They are said to entertain a notion that Adam spoke Basque, which language, having been imported into Spain by Tubal-Cain (a theory, that satisfactorily accounts for the unrivalled excellence of Spanish metal-work), long before the confusion of tongues at Babel, has continued in use ever since; though how their chronology disposes of the Flood, an intervening event of some importance, is not stated. Its pronunciation seems to be more difficult than even the Welsh, and it is an oft-quoted Andalusian joke, that the Basques write Solomon, and pronounce it Nebuchadnezzar!

CHAPTER V.

UP to this time Cambour, the *quasi-courrier* from Bayonne, had been of great use, not only in interpreting for us, and settling the postilions' accounts, but on every emergency he was ready to jump down from the pile of luggage behind, upon which he was usually perched, and at the end of each stage he unfastened the horses, and brought out the fresh set, with such marvellous activity, considering the country through which we were travelling, that we began to regard him as a most valuable acquisition.

There being nothing to detain us at Tolosa, we were off betimes for Vittoria. The country continued very pretty, and pastoral, with trout-streams in every dingle and glen, whose water-power was employed here and there to serve the base uses of a factory, many such establishments being scattered through these highland valleys,

to the certain detriment of their beauty, and probable demoralization of the inhabitants. A considerable amount of traffic seems to be carried on in this neighbourhood, and we were continually passing long files of mules drawing carts of the country, which presented the rudest specimens of the wheelwright's craft I ever fell in with. They consist merely of a bed (to speak in carpenters' phrase), enclosed at the sides, but open at each end, while the wheels are solid circles of wood without spokes, larger in circumference than the largest mill-stones, and being utterly unacquainted with grease, they make a creaking that can be heard a quarter of a mile off, setting one's teeth on edge for the rest of the day.

We were greatly struck, while passing through the different villages on our route, with the number of fine old houses, now, alas! in sadly-reduced circumstances. Built to be the family mansions, *casas solares*, of the noble and high-born, they now bear the stamp of abject poverty, and are tenanted by the mendicant and pauper, though still retaining the arms of their original possessors. These, sculptured out of freestone in a massive bold style, and enriched with most elaborate details, overhang the principal

entrance, reminding you that you are travelling among a people, who have elevated "the pomp of heraldry" to a higher position, than it ever attained in any other country, and within the range of its scanty literature no fewer than 1500 publications on that single subject may be enumerated. Mansions of this description are to be found, not here and there, but in all parts of the northern provinces, hardly a village being without several such memorials of bygone greatness. Wooden balconies are very general, many of them being highly ornamented with pretty carving, much after the fashion of the larger châlets in the Simmenthal, and as we passed they looked bright and gay with pots of carnation in full bloom, that being, apparently, the favourite flower of the non-horticultural Spaniard, as we saw it, and no other, wherever we went, from the Bay of Biscay to the Straits of Gibraltar.

This would be a charming country for a fisherman to ramble through in early summer, abounding as it does with beautiful trout streams, one of the largest being the Deva, our Dee, a name which has probably been Latinized from the Celtic word *du*, black, many terms traceable to the same source existing on each side of the

Pyrenees, as the Adour, derived, like Douro, from *dwfr*, water, and Gave, from *Avon*, a river.

Mondragon, where we changed horses soon after midday, seems a most interesting place, and we could have spent a couple of hours very agreeably in hunting out old houses, and other relics of antiquity. As it was, we had time to see nothing but the exterior of a church close to the posthouse, which, from a very hasty glance, I made out to be principally in the first pointed style. It has two very good doorways of great depth and massiveness, with such bold, well-cut mouldings, and highly-ornamented capitals, presenting a melancholy contrast to the general condition of the building in its untidiness, and disrepair. The old roof has been replaced by a modern affair, such as would suit a respectable cottage,—a transformation that entirely alters the appearance of the church, making the gurgoyles, and other Gothic accessories, look quite out of character, as if they had no longer any business there. The bells hang everywhere in open turrets, exposed to the weather, and, as may easily be imagined, in so rainy and tempestuous a climate, it takes no long while to convert them into real bronze.

The day was everything we could desire, fresh and sunshiny, with occasional showers, producing brilliant bursts of light and shade, that imparted constant variety to this picturesque district. The posting, too, was excellent—at least in respect of its most essential quality, getting over the ground at a good pace—though the harness, which an English cart-horse would be ashamed to wear, and the drivers, carter-looking fellows, who would astound our postboys, did not quite realize one's national ideas of a neat turn-out. The various noises made by the postilions to get their animals along are highly amusing. Every team was composed, either wholly or in part, of mules, and as they appeared to entertain a conscientious objection to starting peaceably, we had a scene at every stage, when it required all the skill and patience of the driver, aided by the extensive experience of Cambour, and the united efforts of ostlers, helpers, and the other hangers-on of a posthouse, to persuade them to take the first step. For a few minutes our ears were assailed with a perfect tornado of shouts, and cries, imprecations and deprecations, which, beginning with “Anda!” (go!) “Anda! Anda!” invariably ended, when breath and patience were exhausted,

in an abbreviated form, "Da! Da! Da!" and then, after a good deal of kicking, starts across the road, or over heaps of stones, with an occasional leg over the pole, or traces, we used to get off at a tremendous pace, that, threatening at first to bring the old Coquette and her cargo to inevitable grief, gradually subsided into a more moderate speed, and carried us merrily to the end of the stage.

According to Ford, the zagal, or guard of the diligence, is sometimes obliged to pelt the team with stones, a store of which he lays up in his belt at every change. We, however, were never reduced to such an extremity as this, owing to our having a lighter load, and shorter stages, than the diligence; and the worst missiles ever hurled at the heads of our quadrupeds were the shocking oaths, and other scraps of bad language, to which the lower classes in Spain are so grievously addicted.

The road was often very hilly, and twice to-day we were obliged to have a reinforcement of oxen to pull us up a long ascent. At the last posthouse, Arrayabe, before entering Vittoria, we were a good deal struck with the figure of an old Jew, who had taken shelter from the pouring rain, with which the afternoon closed, under the

eaves of the stable. He was dressed in a black gabardine, a garment resembling a loose cassock without sleeves, having holes for the arms, and descending to the feet. His hat was just like a beef-eater's, and underneath there peered forth a pair of small, keen, prying eyes, full of distrust and suspiciousness. He looked the very picture of a modern Isaac of York, and though no longer exposed to the same oppression, and cruelty as his prototype, he seemed to feel that all the world was against him, and in every one he saw a probable enemy. The poor old man, however, was not devoid of good-nature; for, seeing the postilion struggling to get into an upper garment, he meekly lent his assistance, receiving no thanks, nor even a nod of acknowledgment in return,—treatment to which he was, evidently, perfectly accustomed. On looking back, I am glad we took such particular notice of him, for we never again saw any one that bore the least resemblance to him in costume, and general appearance.

Vittoria, the scene of the Duke's last great victory in Spain, where, as Southey says, "the French were beaten before the town, in the town, through the town, out of the town, behind the town, and all about the town," is a poor place, with a shabby modern air, that in this

old-fashioned country has quite a vulgar look. Being, however, on the great high road between Madrid and Bayonne, with others branching off to Pamplona and Bilbao, it possesses a superior inn, where at the *table d'hôte* we met several English, of whom we had hitherto fallen in with very few, Mr. Brassey, the eminent railway contractor, being of the party, having come out to superintend the construction of a railroad between Bilbao and Tudela.

Being obliged to move about the country a good deal, he had taken several horses and carriages from England, and on my going out next morning into the stableyard, I was soon accosted by his groom, who, after his enforced silence among the natives, seemed delighted to have a chat with me in his beloved mother-tongue. He gave a piteous account of what he, an English groom, had to go through in that outlandish country, where he could get neither hay, nor oats, and had to feed his horses with barley, "pigs' vittels" in fact,—a diet which he regarded as highly insulting to any respectable, well-bred nag, brought up from foalhood among the comforts of an English stable.

He had all the feelings of a thorough groom, and evidently thought much more of the discom-

fort to which "they poor dumb creatures" were exposed, than any privation of his own, though the Spanish kitchen would prove but a sorry substitute for the beef, and beer of a servants' hall at home. I was glad to perceive, that after he had unbosomed his grievances, and elicited my sympathy, and condolence, he seemed considerably relieved, and felt disposed to take a more cheerful view of things.

While taking my usual early stroll, seeing a good doorway to a church very similar to those at Mondragon, I went in, and found the interior was in the Renaissance style, highly ornamented with shields, and other heraldic devices, fruitage, flowers, &c., all of most elegant design, and admirable workmanship. Having long been desecrated, it now serves as a forage-store to some cavalry barracks, the whole area being filled with straw, which was piled up to the very roof of the apse, just where the high altar stood, while dirty troopers in undress were lying down, and lounging about.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR destination to-day, October 7, was Burgos, a distance of about eighty miles, and the road, which lay through a succession of basin-shaped table-lands, was interesting chiefly from the exactness, with which it satisfied one's preconceived notions of Spain, taking us through desert-like plains, where tree, and hedge are unknown, dotted with sparse, shelterless villages, and swept from end to end by every wind of heaven.

It has often been remarked, that few countries, as delineated on the face of a map, are so destitute of lakes as Spain, none larger than a mere mountain-tarn being anywhere perceptible. This is a very remarkable feature, when the number, and extent of its mountains are considered. But, in passing through the country, you have no difficulty in accounting for that peculiarity. There are lakes in abundance, many of them covering a great extent of surface; but unfortunately, instead of adding to

the beauty of the landscape, they serve a contrary purpose, being utterly devoid of water, and have been in that condition for hundreds, if not thousands of years. So, to-day, those basin-shaped plains, that opened before us one after another in monotonous succession, most of the way to Burgos, are in fact nothing but the beds of dried-up lakes, several of them enclosing a considerable area. The one lying between Vittoria and La Puebla de Arganzon is about twelve miles long by ten broad, and intersected through its whole extent by the river Zadorra, which, passing through a defile in the Morillas hills, traverses in its downward course another such basin of smaller dimensions.

Great pains have been taken to grow avenues of poplars along the wayside, an undertaking of no small difficulty in this thirsty, parched-up land (for by this time we had quitted the pastoral scenery of the Basque provinces, and were approaching the plains of Castille), though a trench is carefully cut round each tree, to enable it to retain as much moisture as possible, whenever rain falls.

It had now become quite evident, from the number of beggars, male and female, adult and juvenile, with their tattered brown clothing,

and mahogany complexion, that we were at length in veritable Spain, and at every post-house we were surrounded by a circle of dusky beings, more inclined to demand, than to solicit our alms. The nuisance becoming at last intolerable, Lord Portarlington determined to try the effect of a specific prescribed by Ford, as an infallible means of getting rid of beggars; and having carefully committed to memory every word of the spell, he addressed the leader of the next group, that attacked us, in the following terms, and with the most praiseworthy gravity, and deliberation of manner, "Perdona me, ustè" (a contraction of "vuestra merced," your grace), "per Dios, hermano!" "Excuse me, your grace, my little brother, for God's sake!" The effect of this incantation was highly encouraging. When first uttered it produced a marked sensation in the assembly, and some of the more modest spirits retired. The second time cleared all but one, and even he decamped at the third reading, and left us in peace.

As a faithful chronicler, however, I am bound to add, that at Briviesca, some stages further on, the experiment was not attended with the same success. Whether this was owing to the fact, that the majority of the mendicants was composed

of women, who have more perseverance, and hopefulness of temperament, than the males, or that, Briviesca having once been the residence of the Spanish court, its inhabitants have inherited a courtier-like pertinacity in begging, or whether it was caused by the combined action of the two circumstances, I am not able to decide.

At Miranda, surnamed after the Ebro, which intersects the town, to distinguish it from fifteen other places of the same name, we finally quitted the Basque provinces, and entered Old Castille. The custom-house people were very civil, and, seeing we were in a hurry, let us off with the mildest examination possible. It was to this place that our Astronomer-Royal, and a large party of scientific people, went for the purpose of observing the eclipse of the sun on the 18th of July last, an expedition that deserved the success it achieved.

Many persons have found the country, through which we were now travelling highly uninteresting. Ford even goes so far as to recommend sleep, as the only expedient to make the journey bearable. We were more fortunate, owing probably to the season; for the frequent rain-storms had not only laid the dust, which in those plains of chalky clay must be intolerable during

hot weather, but they were continually producing a succession of such striking atmospheric effects, as would have made any scenery interesting. To me the views were perfectly novel, glorious in the extreme from their vast extent, richness of colour, and the magical alternations of light and shade, which gave an endless variety of expression to the landscape. Deepest hues of purple and violet, suffused occasionally with a golden glow, lay upon a range of mountains far away to the north-west, like a halo of unearthly splendour. Lord Portarlington was continually reminded of Egypt and Syria, and even I, whose oriental experiences have never extended beyond a shilling investment in Burford's Panorama of Nineveh, could not help feeling, that I was now indeed gazing at scenes which vividly realized the imaginings, and pictures created by descriptions of the East. Nor are we the only wayfarers that have discovered attractions in those wide sweeping plains. The Duc de St. Simon, a man by no means inclined to sentimentalism, when he made the journey a hundred and fifty years ago, at the same time of year, was greatly struck with the transparency of the atmosphere, "and the views and perspectives, which changed every moment."

At no great distance from Miranda comes Pancorvo, a mountain-pass in miniature, overhung with such picturesque castellated rocks, that reminded me of more than one spot on the way between Prüm and Trèves. In olden times this was a post of great importance, being on one side the natural portal and barrier of Castille, and one of the approaches to Madrid, and on the other, serving as a permanent obstacle to the Moorish advance on the northern provinces. Now it is quite dismantled, and has nothing else to do but to diversify the route, and fill a corner of the artist's sketch-book, wherein, that narrow cleft in the limestone rock, barely wide enough to allow passage for the river Oroncillo and the Queen's highway, combined with the quaint old houses of the little town, nestling under the shadow of ruinous towers, would form very effective objects.

When we passed through, the population was in a state of unusual excitement, and two or three bells were ringing furiously, in honour of the Archbishop of Burgos, who was making a confirmation-tour in this part of his diocese. His carriage, an antiquated green fly, drawn by a pair of mules, in which the most ardent Church-reformer could have detected no excess of pre-

latical pomp or luxury, stood at the Cura's door. We afterwards heard a very pleasing account of the Archbishop, while we stayed at Burgos, and having been brought up in England, he always shows attention and kindness to any of our countrymen, who come in his way.

Being anxious to reach Burgos betimes, we travelled on, all day, without stopping, except to change horses. About sunset, feeling the want of some refreshment, I went in search of a draught of milk, while halting at the post-house of Briviesca. I wandered up and down the street in vain inquiries, the natives staring as if they thought me demented. I was not then aware, that milk is about the last thing you should ask for in many parts of Spain, the mythical article ascribed by schoolboys, on the 1st of April, to the pigeon, being quite as easily procured, as the produce of the cow in certain seasons.

Briviesca is rather pretty, and, being surrounded by gardens and orchards, has nothing of that dried-up and parched appearance so noticeable in the towns of this province. It is said to have suggested the plan of Santa Fè, built by Ferdinand and Isabella during the siege of Granada, though certainly that place could never have derived its unequalled hideousness from Briviesca.

It would make a very good halting-place for those, who have sufficient leisure, and, judging from Ford's description, the old convent of Oña, on the Ebro, four leagues and a half off, must be in every respect worthy of a visit.

It was dark long before we reached Burgos, having enjoyed, soon after leaving Briviesca, the spectacle of a glorious sunset, which spread over the western sky some of the finest combinations of rich dark colouring I ever beheld, purple, violet, and crimson, being the predominating hues ; and in such an atmosphere, where every object stands out in mellow distinctness, it was quite a pleasure to watch each gradually disappear in the deepening gloom, until at last night had swallowed up every one, and left us nothing to look at.

CHAPTER VII.

BURGOS being one of the most interesting towns in Spain, it was decided we should stay there from Friday night till Monday morning. I have forgotten the name of our inn, which stood just opposite a cavalry barrack, so that every morning at six we had the full benefit of the toot-a-toot-too, toot-a-toot-too, reveillé, with which Spain awakens her troopers. This was quite a superior hotel, having excellent rooms, handsomely furnished, and very tolerable cooking. Our only objection to the house lay in the swarms of enormous cats, that roamed to and fro through every apartment, with a free-and-easy air, indicative of a lengthened supremacy; while their horrible caterwaulings, which more resembled the nocturnal cries of wild beasts, than the utterances of any respectable domestic animal, "made night hideous." Everywhere, since crossing the frontier, we had remarked the

size and number of the cats; but at Burgos they reached their culminating point, and became a positive nuisance. Whichever way you turned, some hardened old Tom of almost Pre-adamite proportions came into view, goggling at you with his great green eyes, and evidently regarding your presence as an impertinent intrusion on his hereditary domain. Even Whittington would have been shocked at the general demeanour of the Burgos cats, so contrary to all English notions of feline propriety.

The Cathedral was, of course, our first "lion." Like most such buildings in Spain, it is so crowded with works of art—sculpture, wood-carving, alabaster tombs, retablos, ancient Church-plate,—among which a superb processional Cross was pre-eminent,—some choice paintings, and a most glorious array of metal-work,—such as altargates and railings (a *spécialité* of Spanish ecclesiastical art)—that days might well be devoted to their examination. Such cursory visits, as we were able to make, served more to exhaust mind and body, than to leave a clear, satisfactory impression of so multitudinous an assemblage of beautiful objects; and it was, no doubt, from some highly philanthropic motive, to spare future travellers any additional confusion of brain, that

the French smashed nearly the whole of the painted glass, which is said to have been some of the finest in Spain.

This being the first Cathedral we had seen since crossing the frontier, was naturally regarded by us with particular attention. Begun in 1221, it was not finished till 1567, so that the period of its erection extends over the three centuries and a half, during which Gothic architecture passed through its successive stages in what we Britons have been accustomed to call, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular. Even the Sacristan allowed, that it was founded by an Englishman, and as none are so jealous of strangers, or so much inclined to pass over in silence any benefit conferred by a foreigner on their country, as Spaniards, such an admission may be considered conclusive.

The exterior is greatly admired for the variety, and richness of its outline, which embraces a perfect forest of pinnacles, spires, and towers; but unfortunately it is so hemmed in with houses, that it is not easy to find a point taking in the whole sweep of the building from one end to the other. I must say, however, that the appearance of the west end, which, in its original condition, Fergusson puts down as one of the

best façades in existence, is sadly marred in my eyes by the crockets, which stand out in so stiff and formal a manner along the whole length of the two spires, and, as there are eight angles in each spire, and every angle is covered with a row of these incrustations, the effect is far from pleasing.

On entering you are at once struck with an arrangement peculiar to Spanish cathedrals. Instead of having the portion to the east of the transepts large enough to contain a full-sized choir, with the Episcopal throne, stalls for the Clergy, &c., as is the case in the Cathedrals of other countries, the high altar, flanked by a space of two or three bays only, is entirely cut off from the rest of the Church by gates, and screen-work of iron, in front, and on each side, while the actual choir occupied by the general body of clergy during Divine Service stands on the western side of the transept, forming, in reality, a sort of second choir within the constructional nave. This western choir, which can be entered only at its eastern extremity, is connected with the other by low iron railings, about five feet high, extending across the transept, and these, as far as we had the opportunity of judging from the five Cathedrals visited by us, are never removed. Fergusson seems inclined

to derive this arrangement from the Basilicas of primitive times, instancing San Clemente at Rome in support of his opinion, and by way of illustration remarks, that if the western door of the choir of Westminster Abbey were closed up, its plan would exactly represent this peculiarity of a Spanish cathedral.

The obvious objection to this arrangement is, that instead of there being an open nave, allowing the eye to range uninterruptedly from the western extremity to the grand central point of the interior, an enormous mass meets the eye at every turn (the enclosure of the western choir being often a wall of marble, thirty feet high), blocking up the whole breadth of the nave between the aisles, dwarfing the proportions, and marring, to a fatal degree, the general effect of the building.

The most interesting portion of Burgos cathedral is the *Capilla del Condestable*, built at the east end to be the burial-place of the Velasco family, the hereditary Constables of Castille. For elevation and spaciousness of proportion, this chapel might vie with many a church, while its magnificent tombs, profusion of sculpture, and other decoration, combined with its general sumptuousness, render it worthy to be the sepul-

chre of kings. Opposite the entrance stands a stone altar-screen of great beauty, attributed to Juan de Borgoña. But the tombs of the founder and his wife, surmounted by their recumbent figures in alabaster, have a special antiquarian interest, preserving as they do, the exact costumes, personal ornaments, armour, and other characteristics of an age when the dress of the high-born and noble, had been elaborated into an art. There is something very stately and impressive in these tombs, lying apart in their sequestered chapel, under the softened light, that descends from its lofty windows ; and were they in any other part of Spain, they would be regarded as prodigies of the sculptor's skill. But the eye, fresh from the exquisite delicacy and refinement of the royal tomb at Miraflores, which looks as if it had been wrought by no human hands, has become too fastidious and critical to bestow on the monument of Pedro Hernandez de Velasco, and his wife Mencia Lopez de Mendoza, all the admiration it deserves.

Burgos, like all the other Spanish cathedrals we visited, abounds in magnificent iron-work, a department of art which appears to have been cultivated with more care in this country than in the rest of Christendom. Almost every cha-

pel (and some Cathedrals contain no fewer than twenty) is fenced-in by grilles of most graceful design, and admirable workmanship; while the high altar is enclosed on two sides by railings, and in front by gates of the same material, each portion being usually a perfect marvel of the metal-worker's skill. Some of these gates stand thirty feet high, and when constructed of iron, as is almost always the case, are not only richly gilt, so as to have the effect of light and shade, but covered, in addition, with profuse ornamentation—groups of figures representing sacred subjects, which generally exhibit some type, or image of the Holy Eucharist—fruit—flowers—animals—filigree-work—and heraldic devices. The style of these *rejas*, as they are called, is almost invariably *cinque-cento*, which to me was their sole defect. Had they chanced to be formed of any other material than iron and brass, they would never have thus survived to testify to the cunning handiwork of Spanish Tubal-Cains.

There is another peculiarity in Spanish Cathedrals, which may be noticed in passing. At the intersection of the transepts with the nave, rises the *Cimborio*, a construction in the form of a dome, marked externally by a low tower, which

is often octagonal. As far as I can recollect, we have nothing like it in any of our pointed cathedrals, except the Octagon at Ely.

Nothing, however, at Burgos afforded us half the delight we enjoyed from a visit to the Carthusian Convent at Miraflores, about two miles from the town. Though a royal foundation, and still containing the remains of three royal personages, it has shared the downfall of other religious houses in Spain, and now shelters only five monks, who still cling to their old home. Its situation is dreary in the extreme, in the midst of an arid, hungry-looking plain, that reminded Lord Portarlington of the desert behind Cairo; and on entering the precincts, we found a melancholy-looking woman sitting listlessly in the outer cloister, typifying, unconsciously, the desolate condition of this once illustrious convent. Its style is Perpendicular of very simple, unadorned character, while the material, granite, gives it an air of severity and coldness, much more in keeping with its present condition, than with those palmy days, when it basked in the sunshine of royal favour.

The Church contains two of the most marvellous productions of art it was ever my good fortune to behold; a *Retablo*, or altar-screen, and an

alabaster tomb in front of the altar, both erected by Queen Isabella, with the first-fruits, it is said, of America's newly-discovered gold, the artist, El Maestro Gil, having completed this twin-triumph of his craft about the time that Columbus returned from his first voyage in 1493.

The Retablo, a species of altar-screen peculiar to Spain, runs to a height of about thirty feet by twenty-five, and is divided into compartments filled with a series of wood-carvings, characteristically coloured to represent the various events of our Lord's life, the Crucifixion being the grand central design, surrounded by "an innumerable company of angels." Nothing can exceed the beauty of this master-piece; the mere arrangement of such a multitudinous host of figures, exhibiting the utmost power of compression, without crowding or confusion, being itself a marvel of skill. Worthily to describe such a work would require the best powers of a Ruskin, and the barest outline is more than I could venture to attempt. It would take one hours to examine its various details, and I longed to have half a dozen pairs of eyes, and a memory of ten-fold capacity, to enable me to note down, and carry away, its myriad beauties.

The tomb erected by Isabella to her father,

Juan II., and mother, in front of the altar, is said to be the finest work of the kind in existence, an assertion I have no difficulty in believing after seeing that monument. Its material is alabaster, and the dimensions are noble, being about twenty-one feet by fifteen, while it rises five feet from the floor of the church. Its form is octagonal. Upon its horizontal surface lie the figures of Juan and his wife Isabella, arrayed in their royal apparel, and executed with such consummate skill, that one is tempted to fancy they had laid them down to rest, and were turned to stone during sleep, by the operation of some magic influence. The sides of the tomb are filled with subjects from our Lord's life, the four corners being occupied by figures of the Evangelists nearly two feet high, standing in the attitude of watchers over the royal pair. An air of deepest repose and peacefulness broods over the tomb, while its surpassing whiteness imparts a look of peculiar purity, as if it did not belong to earth. No description I could give can convey more than the faintest idea of the impression produced upon the mind by this miracle of Art, as you stand before it in the vain endeavour to master its details. The eye—challenged at the same moment by an infinite

variety of objects, rivalling each other in gracefulness of design, and consummate execution—knows not whither to turn, and glances in hopeless perplexity over the figures of Apostle, Evangelist, Martyr, and Saint, as they stand out adorned with superb costumes, and encircled by wreaths of flowers and fruitage, looking more like the creation of Angel-hands than the workmanship of any dweller in this lower world.

An iron railing which fences-in the tomb, though absolutely necessary to preserve its delicate details from injury, considerably mars the effect of the ornaments with which its sides are covered, by intercepting a clear view; and were the tomb ever photographed, or modelled, it would be necessary to remove this obstruction.

It was a heart-aching sight to look at that silent, deserted convent, with its spacious cloisters untrodden, and its garden overgrown with weeds, while the Brotherhood, once so much visited and honoured by the great ones of the earth, has now shrunk into a poor despised company of five, who can only wear the habit of their order by stealth, and at midnight. The very existence, too, of such marvels as the tomb and altar-screen, in a place on which the world now frowns, makes the contrast between past and present the more

keenly painful; and as we visited the spot on that stormy October day, all the accompaniments—sky, weather, and landscape—were in melancholy harmony with its fallen condition.

At Burgos we first noticed the horrible noise made by Spanish bell-ringers. An Englishman, with his recollections of the merry peals and sweet chimes of his own country, listens with astonishment and horror to the din of a Spanish belfry, where every ringer pulls on his own account, without the least regard to what his fellow-performers are doing, the grand object being to produce as much noise as possible. You listen in vain for anything like scientific ringing; and the mysteries of “Grandsire-bob,” “Single bob-minor,” “Grandsire-treble,” “Triple bob-major,” and all the other permutations of English Campanology, seem in Spain to be utterly unknown.

The dark-eyed little maid that waited on us, finding, I suppose, our manners did not come up to the standard of Spanish punctilio, which, in forms of address and salutation at least, elevates a fisherwoman into a duchess, and places an ostler on the level of a grandee, took every opportunity of giving us instruction in the correct phrases and modes of address, and, by way of

turning them to immediate account, made us use them on all occasions, so that we could get nothing we required from her until, like good children, we had asked for it “prettily.” If we wanted bread, we were obliged to say, “Haga me, ustè, el favor de dar me del pan?” “Will your grace do me the favour to give me some bread?” and a similar formula was necessary whatever we asked for. Poor girl! She was very painstaking for our improvement, and I hope her good-natured endeavours to remedy the deficiencies of an English education were in some slight degree successful, though I fear, that in my own case, a course of instruction, extending over two days only, imparted but a very thin glaze of Spanish politeness to the unceremoniousness of manner native to most Englishmen.

The environs of Burgos contain several objects of interest, which every zealous sight-seer goes to see, though we saw them not. Among these are the cloisters of Huelgas, spoken of by Fergusson as “unrivalled for beauty both of design and detail, and unsurpassed perhaps by anything of their age in any part of Europe.” Then again at San Pedro de Cardena, within a ride of the town, there is the burial-place of that peerless hero of romance and song, Rodrigo Ruy Diaz,

commonly called the Cid, a spot which no traveller of bygone times, before the days of chivalry were gone, would ever have left unvisited. I feel now that the omission was a grave dereliction of duty. Of course we fully intended, before we reached Burgos, going there in due form, but after all did not; for in these degenerate days, the very best intentions do not render any one capable of doing more than *son possible*, and, to say nothing of the deplorable weather, continual sight-seeing, with all its delights and enjoyments, is certainly very exhausting occupation for a middle-aged body like myself.

We used to take refuge from the cold and damp, which seem to contend for supremacy over Burgos, at the fireplace of the *salle-à-manger*, which was as good as a private room, except during diligence hours, occurring generally about midnight, when we were otherwise engaged. Here we met an English gentleman from Leeds, well acquainted with Spain, and we spent the Sunday evening very pleasantly together, discussing ecclesiastical affairs in general, and the probable future of the Church of England in particular.

CHAPTER VIII.

MONDAY, *October* 10.—Packed up and breakfasted, hoping to be off immediately. Had some difficulty in getting the bill, which seemed to be purposely kept back to the very last moment. When at length it did appear, it proved to be a document of singular brevity and conciseness, indulging in none of the details characteristic of such compositions. Its sum-total, however, amounting to 1041 reals, made up for every other deficiency. It is the natural tendency of bills, in all parts of the world, to produce a startling effect on the recipients; but in Spain, this is infinitely aggravated by the national method of computation, all accounts being made up in *reals vellon*, each of which is worth twopence three-farthings, so that the amount claimed by our host at Burgos was no less than £11. 8s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., a sum absurdly disproportioned to the accommodation and entertain-

ment supplied between Friday night and Monday morning. Particulars were asked for to enable us to discover where the imposition lay, but our Spanish, being very small and broken, had no power to elicit anything satisfactory. As Mr. Rider, the gentleman with whom we had made acquaintance yesterday, spoke Spanish fluently, and in such a manner as to produce an impression, we at once availed ourselves of his aid, and nothing could be more kind, patient, and business-like, than his method of settling the affair.

The landlord was sent for, and Mr. Rider cross-examined him on every point. With great difficulty, and considerable application of the screw, he made out a bill of 672 reals, inclusive of some gross overcharges. Beyond that point he could not advance, and when pressed to account for the difference between 1041, and 672, he turned sulky, and refused all further explanation. At last, finding he could not escape, he acknowledged that Lord Portarlington, being a great nobleman, and brother to the Queen of England, was charged the balance of 369 reals (in itself a tolerably large bill of £4. 4s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.) for the various attentions and extra civilities he had received during his stay!! Naturally considering these were hardly worth so much, he declined

paying for them at so high a rate, and the upshot was, that, thanks to Mr. Rider's determination and good management, the bill was ultimately reduced to 760 reals, not, however, before he had been most grossly insulted by the landlady, who, meeting him on the stairs, attacked him like a bereaved tigress, and showered upon him a torrent of Spanish Billingsgate. As Mr. Rider was going to stay another day at the hotel, feeling very anxious he should not suffer on account of his good-natured assistance, we managed to patch up a sort of peace with the landlord, who, to do him justice, soon recovered his temper, and promised to behave properly to our countryman after our departure. This truce did not include his strong-minded help-mate, as we thought it the better part of valour not to meddle with her, while she stormed and raved, in the lower regions of the hotel, at the loss of her hoped-for spoil.

This altercation delayed us a good hour, and when at last I went down to see whether the luggage had been properly stowed away, I found Cambour, who since Tolosa had sadly declined from his first zeal and activity, having in fact become almost useless, looking more unpromising than ever, as, in a sort of muddled, sleepy way, he

professed to be helping Swainson. His face had become almost black, and every vein stood out on his forehead with fearful distinctness, while his general appearance led one to fear he had been spending his days and nights at Burgos in swilling the wine of the country, which has the colour and consistency of ink. He had, at any rate, made himself a most deplorable-looking object.

Having now been five days on the road, including our halt at Burgos, we began to feel rather ashamed of ourselves, and, as we were anxious to reach Madrid by Tuesday night, we determined, when once off, not to rest till we arrived at Castillejo, a village at the foot of the Somo-Sierra mountains.

The bad weather still continued, but between the showers we had magnificent bursts of sunshine, which, contrasting with the deep masses of storm-cloud through which they broke, gave infinite variety to the landscape. Extensive woods of ilex (a feature to which we afterwards became so much accustomed in Estremadura) appeared from time to time, dotted here and there with such picturesque groups of old pollards, while in many places the road was bordered by low scrubby vineyards, their fruit and foliage

being alike plastered with a chalky composition, which, having originally descended upon them in the form of summer dust, had been converted by the autumnal rains into a coating of mud, that would hardly improve the flavour of the approaching vintage. We passed several flocks of long-woolled sheep, on their way to winter-quarters among the sunny *dehesas* of Estremadura, attended by skin-clad shepherds, who looked the very picture of dreamy do-nothingness, and entire immunity from soap and water. Before entering Lerma we crossed the Arlanza, which, like many of the streams in this neighbourhood, abounds with trout. As we drove into the town in heavy rain, nothing could look more wretched—I do not even remember a single beggar making his appearance—and the ruins of a noble palace, built by the Duque de Lerma, in 1604, on a brow overhanging the town, which, after suffering pillage from the French, is now converted into a prison, served only to increase its wretchedness.

Hereabout the eternal brown *pañó pardo* of the Spanish peasantry began to be varied with brighter colours, and the women wore brilliant red stockings, and petticoats of blue or yellow, the latter being the most fashionable. One

soon remarks the extreme beauty of Spanish dyeing, and their scarlets, greens, and yellows are unrivalled for clearness, and distinctness of hue, so different from the dull muddy colours produced in England. The yellows are especially good, being more like a rich, warm canary, than what passes by that name among us.

At Aranda del Duero, we managed to walk on a couple of miles, in advance of the carriage, while they were changing horses, an operation of some time at a Spanish posting-house; and then on we travelled, stage after stage, for hours, until at last, near midnight, we drew up at the *posada* of Castillejo, in a decided state of mind. Having now been on the road more than thirteen hours, we were quite ready for bed, dinner being altogether out of the question, and finding the people of the inn were all asleep, we entered through the stable, which, as usual, occupied the ground floor; and going on a voyage of discovery upstairs, we soon met with the very things we were most in want of—a couple of very clean, comfortable bedrooms, without inhabitants, and forthwith we took possession.

Presently out came the mistress, and setting her arms a-kimbo (a very bad sign, I always

think, in the *beau sexe*), she overwhelmed us with a flood of Spanish, which, however unintelligible in sense, in sound conveyed an unmistakable declaration that our presence was by no means welcome. We had not, however, gone all that distance to budge for a little noise, and paying no heed to her ill-timed remarks, we began to exercise our rights of possession. After a while the daughter, hearing the disturbance, came out of her bedroom, and, so far from reinforcing her "respected parient," she proved a decided acquisition to our side, for, having been brought up at some provincial boarding-school, she could actually speak French! By her intervention we discovered that the hostess, having a conscientious objection to late hours, was perfectly scandalized at the idea of receiving travellers at midnight. Had we known in time of that prejudice, which, in the abstract, is highly commendable, we might have respected it. But here we were, at the foot of the Somo-Sierra, with a pass of considerable elevation to be crossed before we could reach any other inn, and so prejudice must needs give way to necessity.

Still the hostess would not give her consent to our remaining for the night in her house; at length Lord Portarlington brought matters

to an issue by asking the daughter, "Whether they were Catholics, or heathens?" and "If it was part of their religion to deny shelter to the stranger? Even the most uncivilized savages are accustomed to exercise hospitality towards any wayfarers that may stand in need of it; while here, in a Christian land, where the Catholic faith is universally professed, three travellers are denied admittance into a house of public entertainment, at an hour when it is impossible to obtain lodging elsewhere!" This appeal to the most accessible side of a Spaniard's disposition brought the woman to her senses, and without another word she meekly went for the sheets, &c., and glad enough were we to get into our well-earned beds.

Next morning we made our first acquaintance with one of the peculiarities of Spanish travel, which subsequent experience soon made familiar—we could not get a drop of milk, and the mere asking for some seemed to be regarded almost as a personal affront!

Castillejo stands at no great distance from the mountains dividing the two Castilles; and such a wind as came rushing down the ravines, lashing us right and left with whips and scorpions, I have never felt, except in some of the

most-exposed Alpine passes. As all the head-gear, except the hood, of the old Coquette had been removed before we started from Bayonne, we had little protection from those icy blasts, and had to fend off their assaults with cloaks and umbrellas. The road winds slowly to the summit of the pass through a bleak and treeless depression between the mountains, which, despite their height of some 5000 feet, are entirely devoid of interest, being mere rounded elevations of no more character than an ordinary sheep-walk; and we were not sorry to find ourselves descending the other side, at a pace that soon brought us into a more-sheltered district.

Between Buitrago and Lozoyuela, we passed through a very singular tract of country, which Wordsworth would doubtless have described as "a chaotic wild," though my prosaic mind could not help at the moment likening it to a vast natural stoneyard, out of which many and many a Stonehenge might be hewn, covering an extent of about three miles, where granite blocks of every size and shape were strewn about in strangest confusion, as if they had descended in a deluge from the tempest-shattered crags overhanging this wilderness of stone. The cold gray

of the granite, contrasted most effectively with the rich colouring of the distant landscape, which, opening out over boundless plains in the direction of Madrid, lay flooded by streams of slanting sunshine. Two great birds, eagles or vultures, sailing grandly over the serrated ridge to our right, were quite in harmony with the desolate grandeur of the spot.

Just as the day closed, we began to descend from the high ground, over which most of to-day's route lay, into the great plain surrounding Madrid; and though its usual appearance has no more attraction than is commonly presented by any boundless extent of arid corn-land, yet at that moment the approach of night, and the dark shades of indigo that shrouded the distant uplands, imparted a solemn, mysterious character to the scene, redeeming it from the commonplace aspect it generally wears. Cambour asserted, that Madrid itself was visible from this point; but that worthy's moral character having greatly declined in our estimation, we scarcely credited the assertion.

At the last stage before entering Madrid we had to wait some time for horses, and, having had nothing to eat except some fruit since breakfast, were very glad to employ this interval

in the consumption of what were called pigeons (though, for all we could tell, they might have been rooks cooked *à la colombe*), at a very dirty-looking *venta*, where a large party of natives were taking their supper. Another hour saw us driving into the *porte-cochère* of the Hotel Peninsulares, very thankful to have so prosperously concluded a journey generally described by travellers as the very essence of all that is tedious and uninteresting.

CHAPTER IX.

THE excellent situation of the Peninsulares gave us a very favourable first impression of Madrid, when we looked out next morning, curious to see what this least-visited of all European capitals was like. The Calle de Alcalá, in which the hotel stands, is spacious and handsome ; and as, adapting itself to the inequality of the ground, it gradually rises from the Puerta del Sol, and then, from its central point, descends on the other side in a gentle slope towards the Prado, it presents a very imposing appearance, and would be an ornament to any city in Europe. All the time, however, a sort of unconscious feeling lurks in the mind, that so thoroughly modern and western-looking an assemblage of shops and houses as meets the eye on every side, has no business to be the capital of so old-fashioned and semi-oriental a country as Spain. Nor does that feeling pass away

when you extend your observation into other quarters of the town. Go where you will, not a token of antiquity is to be seen; for even the churches, which in most towns stand like Patriarchs among public buildings, do not here claim an earlier date than two or three centuries. In fact, nothing at Madrid looks old, except the fountains, whose atmosphere (if I may use such a term) of moisture and damp, added to the incessant use made of them, has invested them, in a certain degree, with the appearance of age.

If we now turn another way, the front windows of the hotel command the Puerta del Sol, into which several principal streets, Calle de Montera, and Calle de las Carretas, besides the Calle de Alcalá, debouch, making it the most animated and crowded spot in all Madrid, though its unfinished state and low position deprive it of every claim to beauty or picturesque effect; while its architectural pretensions are exceedingly mean and shabby. It owes its high-sounding title, the "Gate of the Sun," which leads you to expect something transcendental, to the circumstance, that when Madrid covered less ground, the east gate used to stand here. But now, when new buildings extend so far

beyond it "towards the rising sun," the Puerta del Sol has become almost as central in situation as it is certainly in all social respects; and if you wish to see whatever stir and life Madrid contains, this is the place to go to, and at all hours, save and except when a bull-fight is proceeding, you are sure to find there something to catch the attention of a foreigner.

Our Burgos acquaintance, Mr. Rider, had recommended us to the Peninsulares, chiefly on account of its situation; and though its entrance and basement are filthy, in addition to some other considerable defects, yet altogether we were tolerably comfortable there, and nothing could exceed the civility and attention of the landlord, an English-speaking native of Gibraltar, who was always at his post, and, by doing his own duty, took care that all his people did theirs also.

There is another hotel, very superior in point of comfort and cleanliness, opposite the English Embassy; but it is so very far out of the way, and so dreadfully quiet for those who wish to see what is going on, that we became perfectly reconciled to the deficiencies of the Peninsulares, and felt no desire to change our quarters.

We see the Queen drive out most evenings

about nightfall, just when the rest of the world is going home, and she seldom returns before it is quite dark. There are generally three or four carriages-and-six, uncommonly well appointed, with beautiful horses; coachmen, postilions, and footmen, being very well got-up, and the whole turn-out is worthy of Royalty. But what delights us most of all in the *cortège* is "the coach of respect," an empty carriage, with blinds down, drawn by four lovely cream-coloured horses, which brings up the rear of the procession, having very much the same office to perform in the Royal retinue, that empty carriages do with us at funerals. The idea is thoroughly Spanish, and is quite in keeping with the traditional notions of the most ceremonious people in Europe.

We used to remark, that when the King goes out like a private gentleman, and drives a light open carriage-and-pair, he hardly gets a bow, even when passing along the much-frequented Calle de Alcalá, as if his state-worshipping subjects did not think it worth while to give themselves the trouble of uncovering for so slender an equipage. But, at the approach of the grand procession, coaches-and-six, *coche de respeto*, and smart escort of Lancers, off goes

every hat in the presence of such unmistakable tokens of royalty.

One of the characters in "Contarini Fleming," the hero's stepmother, has great respect for furniture. The Spaniards entertain the same feeling towards carriages; and as we travelled from Irun to Madrid in the lumbering old *Coquette*, a vehicle that exhibited a good many Peninsular peculiarities of construction, bows seemed to come by instinct from almost every wayfarer we passed.

As soon as Lord Portarlington had left his name at the English Embassy, an invitation to dinner for the same evening was sent immediately, in which I was kindly included, Sir Andrew Buchanan being at the moment so much engaged with urgent business, that he could not call till next day. Feeling unwell, I did not avail myself of Lady Buchanan's kindness, but enjoyed afterwards the pleasure of joining her party twice, spending each time a very agreeable evening. Indeed, most of our enjoyment while at Madrid was owing to the great kindness received at the Embassy, where the national hospitality is maintained with as much refinement, as liberality, in the midst of a society, where dinner-giving is unknown. It

is a real satisfaction to an Englishman, to observe how much his country's representative is respected, among a people by no means disposed to regard foreigners with too favourable an eye.

One of the evenings we dined at the Embassy, Don P. Gayangos, the author of "Mahommedan Dynasties in Spain," and, to use the words of Ford, "the first Hispano-Arabic scholar of his day," was of the party.

When, for the first time, I went *up* to the *table d'hôte* (for, contrary to the wont of any other hotel I was ever in, the *salle-à-manger* of the Peninsulares is at the very top of the house), I found eight or ten compatriots at table. Next to one of these, a fine, well-grown specimen of the true Englishman, of frank simple manners, and open countenance, I had a place assigned me. Judging from his moustache and beard, I set him down as an officer from Gibraltar. He turned out, however, to be a clergyman, of the name of Southwell, and had acquired those soldierly appendages in the Crimea, where he served as an Army-Chaplain. He and I soon struck up an acquaintance, and we saw a good deal of him, both at Madrid, and afterwards at Seville; for he was one of those kindly, warm-

hearted natures, so peculiarly attractive among strangers; and when we parted for the second time, it was in the hope of meeting him once more at Gibraltar, where he purposed going before he sailed from Cadiz for the Havannah. From some cause, however, we never saw him again, and the other day, greatly shocked were we to hear, that while on a tour in Canada, he was thrown from his horse, and killed on the spot, in the very prime, and flower of his age. He had travelled much, both in Europe and in the East, and his genial disposition seemed to have won friends wherever he went. He gave promise of eventually settling down into a very useful country clergyman.

I never look back to that dinner, without melancholy feelings, as another of the merry party, with whom I spent so agreeable an hour, and he one of the youngest and most animated of the company, a Mr. Blakeway, who resided permanently at Madrid, has long been numbered with the dead, having fallen a victim to one of those deadly fevers, so common to that climate, in the course of last winter.

Indeed, even during our short stay of ten days, we had a fatal proof of the extreme unhealthiness of Madrid, in the death from typhus of a young

Englishman, named Waring. He was an engineer of considerable distinction and more promise, and had gone there on business connected with some of the railways in progress. There being at the time no Chaplain attached to the Embassy (a deficiency that I understand has since been supplied, chiefly by the liberality, and exertions of Sir Andrew Buchanan), I was requested to officiate at his funeral. It took place at the English Cemetery, which Lord Howden had so much difficulty in securing for the use of our countrymen. It is still unconsecrated, nor is there, I fear, much probability that Spanish intolerance will grant to the reverential feelings of Englishmen, a boon they would grieve to have denied to themselves. It is, however, properly enclosed with a high wall, and the authorities (especially our Consul, Mr. Brackenbury) take great pains to have everything about it kept up with scrupulous care.

The first portion of the Burial Service was celebrated in a vaulted room within the gateway (which a trivial outlay would soon convert into a very tolerable substitute for a cemetery chapel), and, as the glorious words of St. Paul fell on the ear, like the notes of a trumpet, the bonds of a common religion, and country, seemed to come

home with peculiar force, while I remarked the presence of several persons (Sir Charles and Lady Eastlake among the number) totally unconnected with the deceased, except by the ties of Christian brotherhood in the Church of England, who, in spite of rain and storm, had come that day to express their sympathy with his sorrowing relations, and whose demeanour gave proof, that, go where one may, there are still to be found tender, loving hearts, which can weep for them that weep, even though they be utter strangers, and “from their own, have learnt to melt at others’ woe.”

CHAPTER X.

OUR first enterprise, in the way of sight-seeing, was a visit to the magnificent Museo, the finest picture-gallery in the world, which is said to contain a larger number of good paintings, and a smaller proportion of indifferent ones, than any in existence. As far as regards the convenience of strangers, nothing can be better managed, and every day, and all day through, the massive portals of the Museo open to your touch, without the intervention of a silver key, and, once in, you find a number of most civil attendants, who appear to take a pride in making your visit as agreeable as possible.

No gallery can be better adapted for the quiet study of pictures ; and as you wander through those spacious, shady rooms, far away from the din of the town, you not only feel yourself to be in the presence of some of the noblest works of Art in the world, but to have besides everything you require for the thorough enjoyment of them.

Your sole difficulty arises from the overpowering array of beauty meeting the eye on every side, which makes selection impossible, until the first burst of excitement has somewhat subsided.

It has often been remarked, how vividly the grandeur of Nature, as it is revealed in some of her sublimest scenes, brings home the sense of man's insignificance. But there is no situation where I so keenly realize my own limited powers of observation, as when brought face to face, for the first time, with such a multitude of master-works, as are contained within the walls of some great picture-gallery. I long to have every faculty multiplied tenfold, so as to possess in some adequate measure the capacity for apprehending, and mastering, the myriad impressions produced by contact with those glorious emanations of genius; and as one idea crowds upon another, and image chases image in rapid succession through the mind, I wander about in helpless despair, feeling as if "Chaos were come again," and had taken entire possession of my poor brain.

Let not that worthy individual, the reader, to whom so much deference is justly due, imagine for a moment, that in making the following observations on some of the contents of the

Museo, I am going to be guilty of such unpardonable presumption, as to attempt anything like a catalogue of its treasures, an undertaking none but a Ruskin could safely venture upon. I crave no more than the permission accorded to every traveller, simply to put down what I saw, and the impression left on my memory by the few paintings I had time to examine.

Our first visit was devoted to the room on the right hand as you enter, which may be truly called a National Gallery, as it contains none but Spanish paintings, by Velasquez, Murillo, Ribera, Joanes, Zurburan, and others. Velasquez, however, is the glory of this saloon, and here he may be seen in every phase of Art—portraits, landscapes, historical subjects, animals, and even the lowest scenes of common life—and in all he seems equally at home. His religious subjects are considered the least effective, and Ford, in his charming *Life of Velasquez*, published in the “*Penny Cyclopædia*,” is daring enough to say that his sacred subjects are holy only in name. Yet one of his works in this room, a “*Crucifixion*,” marked 51, appears to me to be absolutely perfect.

Boldly relieved against a sky of deepest gloom, our Lord’s figure stands out in solitary sublimity,

His face partially concealed by long tresses of dishevelled hair, falling upon it like a veil; and the mind, undistracted by the presence of any other object, is absorbed in awe-struck contemplation of the greatest event man's eye ever beheld. An indescribable air of desolation pervades the whole picture, as if it were intended to represent that moment of unknown agony, when our Saviour cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—while the perfect simplicity of its composition, gives it far more reality and grandeur, than if the canvas were encumbered with a number of figures: it is indeed the Son of Man treading the wine-press alone.

This room contains some of Velasquez's finest portraits, among which 299 and 303 stand pre-eminent, representing Philip IV. and his Queen, Isabella, on horseback, in which the king's stately war-horse, and his wife's high-bred jennet, together with the countenances, figures, and costumes of the royal pair, and a charming background to the King's portrait, are painted with as much freedom and grace, as if such perfection of Art were the easiest thing in the world, and you could do it yourself, if you set about it. Indeed, this is one of the most remarkable

characteristics of Velasquez, that he seems to have done everything with as much facility, as if the skill of a master came to him, like Dogberry's reading and writing, by nature, and he had been born a painter.

If you wish to understand the decline and fall of Spain, go and study its portraits, which, bridging the space of two centuries, set you down face to face with Kings and Queens, Infantes and Infantas, so that you see Spanish royalty in all its childishness and imbecility, exactly as he saw them; and you will soon cease to wonder how it came to pass, that "the first of nations" has so utterly lost her pride of place, as now, in the year 1860, to be obliged *to beg* for admission, as a first-rate Power, into the councils of European statesmanship.

Each countenance wears that peculiar expression, so noticeable in a good portrait, which convinces you, even when you do not happen to be acquainted with the features of the original, that you have before you a veritable likeness.

Some of the Kings and Infantes appear in their shooting dress, and the dogs at their side are painted as by one who knew, and appreciated, the nobleness of their nature.

Dwarfs, so much in fashion at the Spanish

Court in those days, have on his canvas, to a startling extent, the malevolent, elvish expression peculiar to such deformed creatures; and as, with instinctive repugnance, you avert your eyes from their repulsive figures, you feel almost afraid of exciting their enmity by the action, so painfully real and life-like do they appear.

But perhaps the predominating impression, created by the portraits of Velasquez, where the subject is worthy of him, is, that no master ever appreciated more keenly, the innate dignity of man, apart from mere position and conventional circumstances. Let Vandyck be the limner of princes and nobles, let Titian portray the lineaments of genius and intellect: Velasquez is still the painter of man as he stands forth in his true character—the noblest work of God.

In the same room are multitudes of pictures by other masters, most of which we had not time to look at, though well deserving a careful study. One of the most remarkable is No. 16, “Jacob’s Dream,” by Ribera (Spagnoletto), a work of marvellous power, and naturalness, though Jacob is a mere clownish peasant in the garb of a monk, nor does his heavy, coarse countenance exhibit the slightest indication of the rapturous feeling that would be kindled by the glories of such a vision.

At the further end of the room, to your left on entering, a Magdalen caught my attention immediately, as a picture of rare expressiveness, and I returned to it again and again, with ever-increasing pleasure. It is labelled as of the school of Murillo, but I cannot now recollect its number. I never saw such a delineation of intense, overwhelming sorrow, which absorbs the whole being of the penitent, and renders her totally unconscious of all else; as if in the whole universe there existed but two objects of thought—her own sin, and the Saviour's love.

Our next and subsequent visits were devoted with almost equal exclusiveness to another portion of the Museo, the room opening on the left side of the great central gallery, which is called, if I mistake not, the Queen's Cabinet. This room possesses more general interest, than the former, as it contains masterpieces of nearly every school. Here the eye lights at once on the finest equestrian portrait in the world, Titian's Charles V. It is indeed a superb picture, and Charles, with his grave, thoughtful face, and firm, easy seat, rides forth, lance in hand, like some Paladin of old, in quest of knightly adventure, and looks every inch a King. You never think of Art, or painter, while gazing at this marvel. You have the very

man before your eyes, and if he moves not, it is because for the moment he stands spell-bound, awaiting your pleasure.

Near it is Velasquez's reputed masterpiece, No. 155, called "*Las Meninas*" (the Female Pages). To those, who are conversant with the mechanical difficulties of painting, it must be an endless delight to study such a triumph of art, which a non-professional eye cannot sufficiently estimate. But the subject is so disagreeable, that I found my attention continually drawn away by the fascinations of the neighbour-picture, of which I have just spoken.

Velasquez has here painted himself in his studio, on the point of taking the portrait of the Infanta Margarita, the central figure, while her two ladies, *Las Meninas*, are doing their best to coax the little body, a girl about twelve, fair and inanimate as a wax doll, into good-humour, a task of no small difficulty, to judge from the ill-conditioned peevishness of her countenance. On her left, two dwarfs, male and female, are teasing a noble mastiff lying on the floor, who, thoroughly worried, and disgusted by their impertinence, is yet evidently determined not to be put out of temper by such caricatures of humanity, though you expect every moment to

hear his muttered growl of indignation. On the other side of the Infanta, withdrawn a little from the foreground, stands Velasquez himself, brush and pallet in hand, waiting with dignified patience, and gravity, for the desired expression, while in the background a door opens upon a landscape, to let out a retiring figure. It makes you sad to see two such natures, each, man and dog, so noble of his kind, at the mercy of beings so infinitely beneath them, as the spoilt child of royalty, and those misshapen butts of a silly court. You feel that Art is degraded, when one of her greatest masters is condemned to such a task; and yet out of those unpromising materials, the genius of Velasquez has wrought one of its most lasting monuments. For this picture has been called "*La Teologia*," the Gospel of Art; and our own Wilkie declared, that its power amounts almost to inspiration.

On the further side of Charles V., hangs another of Velasquez's portraits, with a background of exquisite freshness and beauty, Don Balthasar, a boy on a pony, sitting as if he were glued to the saddle, and galloping bodily out of the canvas.

Just opposite, on the other side of the room, is 319, another grand work, which to me was

the most interesting of all his historical subjects. It represents the capitulation of Breda, in June, 1625, after a siege of ten months. Spinola, the Spanish commander-in-chief, with his refined Italian face, and high-bred, elegant figure, occupies the centre of the picture, and as he receives the keys of the town from the governor, it is quite charming to observe the almost feminine expression of respect, and sympathy, with which he meets his gallant antagonist, taking away all the humiliation, and most of the pain, of being obliged to surrender to so generous a foe. Right in the fore-ground, on one side, bristles a whole forest of lances (from which the picture derives its name of "*Las Lanzas*"), an audacity of Art few could have ventured upon, but producing, by the magic of Velasquez's handling, a rare, and striking effect.

The gallery teems with magnificent portraits, some few of which I could mention. No. 1515, is marked in Ford as Rubens's portrait of Sir Thomas More, which must have been copied from some earlier likeness, as Henry VIII.'s great Chancellor had been beheaded more than forty years before Rubens was born.

No. 992, by Albert Durer, seems absolutely on the point of speaking, while another (972,) by

the same, inscribed with his signature, represents the painter himself, with a lovely bit of landscape, gleaming through an open window in the background. 905, Raphael's "Cardinal Julio de Medici," brings before you a master-mind, the *beau idéal* of an Italian Churchman. No. 1446, is a portrait of our Queen Mary, by Antonio More, a most forbidding, peevish countenance, admirably painted; 734, a young Italian, by Bronzino, pensive, and full of expression; while 765, and 769, are Titian's portraits of Charles V., with his Irish wolf-hound, and of Philip II. when young, clothed in a suit of armour, which is still preserved in the Armeria Real.

Some of these hang in the great central saloon.

The Queen's Cabinet contains several interesting works by the early Flemish masters, the Van Eycks, Hans Hemling, &c. Among them I particularly noticed a triptych, by Hemling, the "Adoration of the Magi," in which a quaint little market-place, half unthatched, shelters the Infant Saviour, the two folding panels containing a "Nativity," and a "Presentation in the Temple." The colouring is gorgeous, and the finish equals that of a miniature.

Another "Adoration" by the same hand, No. 467, is treated in a much plainer manner, as if the three Kings had gone to worship our Lord, in their every-day dress, while the colouring is more sober, and subdued.

I remarked also a series of subjects, catalogued as belonging to the German school of the fifteenth century, extremely beautiful, illustrating religious Art in its earlier, and more reverent days.

The Annunciation comes first. When the Archangel appears, the Virgin is on her knees in a Gothic oratory. The countenance of each forms quite a study, exhibiting that elevated heavenly expression so rarely observed, except in the older masters; while, with a touch of that almost comic quaintness peculiar to the art of that age, Gabriel's wings glisten with the motley splendour of a peacock's plumage. In each of the four paintings the foreground is framed-in with a pointed arch of great elegance, and the subject withdrawn with excellent effect into the recess thus formed.

The second represents the meeting of the Virgin and Elizabeth, with a German medieval house, and pretty landscape.

In the third appear Angels, with the Virgin, and Joseph, adoring our Lord, Who is painted as

the most diminutive infant imaginable, (by way perhaps of realizing more vividly His humiliation in taking upon Him our nature,) and on a hill in the blue distance stands Jerusalem. In the fourth, and last of the series, the Adoration takes place under a shed, in shape like a lychgate. I found these paintings full of interest, not merely on account of their extreme beauty, and the reverential spirit with which the subjects are treated, but from the introduction of so many details of Gothic architecture, a feature very rarely to be noticed in the compositions of later masters, when the Renaissance style had become almost universal.

In the same room (the Queen's Cabinet), there is a most curious painting from the Escorial collection by Patenier (a master I had never heard of before), the "Temptation of St. Anthony." The Saint is on his knees, surrounded by demons in every form, each more grotesque and hideous than his fellow, from which you turn with pleasure to an exquisite background suffused by a strange, and almost ghastly tinge of green—a landscape taken from Dream-land, exhibiting one of those enchanting scenes of idealized beauty, which the early painters delighted to depict.

On the other side of the doorway are two hunting pieces, 1006, 1020, by Lucas Cranach, one of which represents a herd of deer being driven into a lake, where they are slaughtered wholesale by the cross-bows of sportsmen posted on the banks. The figures, countenances, costumes, buildings, and other details are all German, and the two pictures exhibit a disregard of perspective, that makes one quite uncomfortable, as you feel afraid the whole scene, lake, sportsmen, and game, is on the very point of slipping down bodily, to descend like an avalanche on your toes.

In an Englishman's mind, however, that magnificent collection awakens some very painful thoughts, as several of its choicest treasures once belonged to Charles I., and were sold after his death by the Puritans. Ford states, that Philip IV. bought so largely at the sale through his ambassadors, that eighteen mules were required to transport the purchases, when landed in Spain. One of them, the famous "Perla" of Raphael, a Madonna and Child, alone cost £2000, a very large sum to be paid for a picture in those days. It is said to be much damaged by cleaning, both at Paris and Madrid; but to my mind it still appears a masterpiece. The

Virgin's face is full of such tender sweetness, and maidenly modesty, while the background is one of those landscapes of deepest blue, with which Perugino, and painters of his date, loved to invest their imaginings of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Close to it hangs 741, another by Raphael, "La Virgen del Pez," Tobit presenting a fish to the Virgin. This is probably an earlier work, as its style is more severe, while the countenance of the Virgin wears an expression almost of sternness, and her figure exhibits the lofty dignity of a matron, rather than the flexible grace of a maiden. Many prefer this to the "Perla," over which it possesses the undoubted advantage of having suffered less from the barbarism of picture-cleaners.

A third of Raphael's great paintings, 784, called "El Pasma de Sicilia," from having been painted for a Church in Sicily, stands at the upper end of the Queen's Cabinet. It represents our Lord, Who is bearing His Cross, as having sunk exhausted on the ground, while the Virgin and three other women kneel beside Him, Veronica being in the background. Priests, and officers, follow on horseback, while foremost in the procession come soldiers, one of whom is in

the act of striking our Lord with a scourge. Calvary with its three crosses, and groups of spectators, rises in the distance. I was most pleased with the figure of Veronica, whose countenance expresses sympathy, and reverential pity, too deep for utterance.

This painting, too, has undergone cruel treatment from the picture-cleaners, who seem at Madrid to carry on their work of destruction on a fearful scale.

I will conclude this hasty notice of some few of the Museo's treasures (for several of its rooms, filled with gems of Art from almost every continental master, I had not time even to enter), with 229, a "Conception" of Murillo's, the most beautiful, I thought, of all his paintings I saw anywhere in Spain. The Virgin's face is radiant with a look of perfect innocence and purity, mingled with childlike wonderment at the unspeakable honour vouchsafed her; and the figure, while it has sufficient firmness, and substance to represent humanity, has yet marvellous lightness and buoyancy, as if she scarcely pressed the wreaths of cloud floating under her feet.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE we were at Madrid, a bull-fight took place, the eighteenth, and last of the season. Though feeling the greatest repugnance to witness such a spectacle, I went nevertheless; and in spite of many revolting incidents, that made me heartily glad when it was over, I do not altogether regret to have been present, as the sight has enabled me to understand some points in the national character, which would otherwise have been quite unintelligible.

It came off on Monday, the 17th of October, this day of the week being most in fashion at Madrid; whereas, in the provinces, those exhibitions, so utterly unbecoming a Christian people, take place on the day, which above all others is associated in an Englishman's mind with everything that is sacred and peaceful. What is still more singular, religion has taken under her

especial patronage the national sport of Spain, and in that very arena, which more vividly than any other place of modern amusement recalls the bloody Roman circus, and the slaughter of the early Christians, the Spanish Church erects her altars, and celebrates the highest mystery of the Catholic faith. It will be thought almost incredible, being all the time only too true, that a chapel forms one of the various offices attached to a bull-ring, and whenever a bull-fight takes place, there mass is regularly said, and attended by all the performers; while a priest is at hand during its continuance, to administer the last rites of the Romish communion in case of any serious casualty. The chapel belonging to the Plaza de Toros at Madrid, which we visited the morning before the bull-fight, actually stands in the stable-yard, a strange situation for such a building.

No one, I suppose, would ever think of instituting a comparison between the bull-ring, and the stage. Many persons, whose judgment is entitled to the highest consideration, have thought a good play, well performed, calculated to produce a direct moral effect on the spectator; while the most enthusiastic votary of the bull-ring would hardly venture to say as much in

behalf of his favourite amusement. But the Church of Rome, while she excommunicates actors simply as such, *ex officio* in fact, without the least reference to their private character, is inconsistent enough to sanction, in this marked manner, and with the most solemn act of her worship, the spectacle of a bull-fight.

One of Shakspeare's most charming characters, Rosalind, propounds a theory, that lovers do not meet with the treatment they deserve—"a dark house, and a whip, as madmen"—simply because the lunacy is universal. Does the Church of Rome in Spain extend her sanction to that brutalizing exhibition for the same reason—the universality of the passion for bull-fighting among all classes in the Peninsula, high and low, secular and clerical? Has she compromised her mission as a Church—to humanize and soften the rugged nature of man—out of worldly wisdom, knowing that the Spaniards would have their beloved sport at all cost; and, for the preservation of her temporal influence, does she sacrifice her essential principles, as the professed representative of Him, whose mercy is over all His works?

This, however, is not all. According to Ford, who is anything but a bigoted Protestant, she

turns the national pastime to her own ends. In his "Gatherings from Spain," p. 287, he thus writes :—"In Spain, the Church of Rome, never indifferent to its interests, instantly marshalled into its own service a ceremonial at once profitable, and popular ; it consecrated butchery by wedding it to the altar, availing itself of this gentle handmaid, to obtain funds in order to raise convents. Even in the last century, Papal bulls were granted to mendicant orders, authorizing them to celebrate a certain number of Fiestas de Toros, on condition of devoting the profit to finishing their Church ; and in order to swell the receipts at the doors, spiritual indulgences, and releases from purgatory (the number of years being apportioned to the relative prices of the seats), were added as a bonus to all that was paid for places at a spectacle hallowed by a pious object."

Imagine our venerable Primate, his Grace of York, and the other Bishops of the Church of England, advertising, under their distinguished patronage, a set-to between Sayers and the Benicia Boy, for the benefit of the Sons of the Clergy, the Foundling Hospital, or any other charitable institution ! Or, to put the case in another point of view, let us fancy the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, renting the

Grand Stand at Epsom on a Derby Day, as a pious speculation, with a view to raising funds for the restoration of the Abbey!

Surely charity-balls, fancy-fairs, and bazaars, and other questionable substitutes (now happily all but exploded) for genuine almsgiving, lose much of their objectionable character, and almost acquire an aspect of religion and virtue, when contrasted, as expedients for wheedling money out of Christian pockets, with the horrors of an eleemosynary bull-fight.

Nothing can prove more incontestably the hold gained over the Spanish mind by the Fiesta de Toros, "The Feast of Bulls" (as the bull-fight is called with grim irony, the poor victims having anything but a festive part to play), than the large sums of money expended upon it in a country, where funds are so much needed for important national objects. Each exhibition costs about £400, and lasts about three hours!

More than twelve performers are required, and as many towns possess a bull-ring, without being able to support a local company, they go about from place to place during the season, a term of five or six months, from Easter to the middle of October.

Readers of "Pickwick" will recollect Sam

Weller's interesting statistics respecting the London piemen, who, according to his account, adapt their comestibles to the time of year, meat-pies being in season at one period, while at another fruit tarts are all the fashion ; or, to quote the pithy language of the original statement, " When fruit is in, cats is out."

In Spain the pig and the bull bear a similar relation to each other, the former never dying a legal death between Easter and the Feast of All Saints, during which period the sale of pork is strictly prohibited ; while the slaughters of the bull-ring take place only from about Easter to Michaelmas, as the bulls do not fight well in cold weather.

In the forenoon preceding the performance, we went to see the bulls driven into the stalls, where they are kept till they make their first appearance, and their last, before the public. We heard so much about this ceremony, that we naturally expected something of no common interest. It proved, however, almost as tame a business, as driving a dairy of well-conducted English cows to their milking-ground ; and were the *encierro*, as this affair of driving the bulls to the Plaza is called, ever introduced, with appropriate music, among the incidents of an opera, I would humbly suggest that the " Ranz des

Vaches" would be a strain much more "in accordance with the sentiments of the scene," as it appeared to us, than the *torero's* ballad, "Estando toda la Corte," so highly praised by Ford, and rendered into English with so much spirit by Lockhart.

We took the opportunity of inspecting all the arrangements of the Plaza de Toros, which, in addition to the amphitheatre, contains quite an extensive range of buildings, among which we particularly noticed a small infirmary, where "casualty cases" (to adopt the language of Mr. Robert Sawyer) are taken direct from the bull-ring; and in the stables we found sixteen or twenty poor horses, the sweepings of cab-stand, and post-house, destined for that day's slaughter.

But really the most patient of readers will complain (and with justice) of being detained so long on the outside of that "charmed circle," which contains the *summum bonum* of a Spanish mob.

Let us enter then, and as the kindness of a gentleman we met at the Embassy has supplied us with tickets, our entrance will cost us nothing. We received at the same time a printed paper, which, combining in a measure the characteristics of a play-bill, and that peculiarly English document, "a list of all the running horses," gives

not only the names of the performers (who at Madrid, "the Court," are always the foremost men of their craft), but the colour, breeders' names, and birth-place of all the bulls, in the order of their appearance.

Our tickets being first-class, we mount to the upper story, on the shady side of the building, enter a box of the plainest description, and at once find ourselves in a vast circle, face to face with ten thousand human beings, the greater part of whom are "sitters in the sun," the price of places increasing in proportion to their shadiness. The ground-plan of the amphitheatre may be described by two concentric circles, of which the inner one, No. 1, forms the battleground, and is pierced, at intervals, by openings large enough to admit a man sideways, through which the men on foot, when sore pressed and unable to escape in any other way, dart into the outer space, marked No. 2. The actual ring encloses an area of about two acres, covered with the fine white sand, so common in most parts of Spain, and its surface, now so smooth and spotless, will soon be crimsoned by many a stain of blood.



Scarcely have we taken our seats (and uncommonly hard are they) before a flourish of trumpets is heard, the barrier opposite us is withdrawn, and in marches the entire troop of performers (the bull alone excepted)—*picadors*, *chulos*, *banderilleros*, and *matadors*, a team of four handsome mules, gaily caparisoned, and hung with bells, (whose office is to drag out the carcasses of bulls and horses) closing the procession, which forms the prettiest feature of the whole performance.

The appearance of the *picadors*, who alone of all the actors engaged are on horseback, is a ludicrous caricature of the gay, active, well-mounted *caballero* of ancient Spanish knight-hood. By way of protection against the horns of the bull, their legs are encased in a species of leathern overall, stuffed to such a degree, that as they ride in they look exactly like a row of dropsical patients, very much in need of tapping. Nor do their steeds cut a better figure, being the sorriest-looking jades imaginable, as they come limping in with one eye blindfolded, having been reprieved from the knackers, only to be butchered in the bull-ring.

There are some ten, or twelve performers on foot, *chulos* and *banderilleros*, and being

all active, well-made men, dressed in the old-fashioned Spanish costume, something like a court-suit, consisting of silken coat, embroidered waistcoat, spangled breeches, and silk stockings, they form a most brilliant, picturesque group, and light up the scene with their flashing colours.

The matador, or *espada* (as it seems now to be the fashion to call him), the performer *par excellence*, who closes each fight by despatching the bull single-handed, is dressed much in the same style, and has his hair gathered like a woman's into a thick mass at the back of his head.

This gay procession, strange precursor of the bloody scenes that follow, having advanced with flourish of trumpets to the centre of the ring, halts, and makes obeisance opposite the box of the president, who, by throwing to an alguazil the key, which admits the bull, gives the signal for the commencement of the performance.

The door, on which twenty thousand eyes are fixed in steadfast gaze, now opens, the bull comes bounding forth towards the centre of the ring, and there, stunned at once by the sudden burst of sunshine, after the darkness in which he has been immured, and the novel scene upon which

he has made so abrupt an entrance, he pauses for an instant transfixed, and glares around in fierce amazement. It is a moment of intensest excitement, but before you fully realize the tumult of emotion compressed into those brief seconds, the bull, breaking the spell that enchained him, has charged one of the chulos full tilt, and presses him so closely that he has barely time to vault over the barrier, a height of at least six feet, which the bull clears after him with an activity, that seems impossible to so large an animal, only to find himself, however, carried back by his own impetuosity into the ring, by one of the side passages provided for such an emergency.

One of the three horsemen, always in the ring, riding forward now plants himself in front of the bull, and couching his lance, armed with a steel point, something like the spike of a boat-hook, aims at the junction of neck and shoulder-blade. The bull, eager to be at somebody, accepts the challenge, and, dashing at the horse with his tremendous horns, pierces him through the heart, and as steed and rider roll over in the dust, a fountain of blood (one of the most horrible sights imaginable), spouting forth, with the force of a jet, two or three feet high into the

air, soon drains out the poor horse's life, and releases him from misery.

The chulos have already darted forward to the rescue of their comrade, and distracting the bull's attention by waving their scarlet flags and cloaks in his face, they extricate the picador as he lies entangled and helpless under his horse; the other horsemen take up the game, placing their horses always so as to cover their own persons; chulos dart here and there, and everywhere, and when, maddened and confounded by so ubiquitous a swarm of foes, the bull singles out any one, and charges home, he finds him as unassailable as a ghost, so perfect is the coolness and self-possession, with which these consummate artists evade the charge, stepping aside with graceful ease at the very moment, when you expect to see them tossed into the air.

In ten minutes two more horses are struggling in their death-agony, while those that are still able to continue the fight, move about half disembowelled, treading on their own entrails, and the sand is covered with many a pool of blood.

The bull, too, now begins to show symptoms of distress, and, with neck and shoulders wounded and gory, he pauses, poor creature! a moment

for breath. One would think such a spectacle had power to move the hardest heart, and that the noble beast having "proved the mettle of his pasture," might be allowed to retire, and enjoy the life his courage had thus redeemed. In all that throng of ten thousand, not a dozen voices would be found to give expression to such a sentiment, and the victim of man's cruelty must furnish to the uttermost his portion of the entertainment, the first act of which has alone been exhibited as yet!

And now the banderilleros, each armed with a pair of the light, gaily-ornamented darts, from which they take their name, come forward, and, with astonishing dexterity, plant in the bull's neck these instruments of torture, to which fireworks are attached, and as they explode one after another, a new ingredient of horror is thrown into the scene; while the poor bull, in the midst of fire and blood, bellows with pain and dismay, and, goaded into fresh efforts, rushes wildly through the ring, without presence of mind, or strength enough left to make a successful charge; till at last, black with sweat, and foaming at the mouth, he stands at bay, with the sullen determination of despair, as if, having at length found out what it all meant, he

was resolved to die like a hero. The crisis has come, and with one of those ruthless cries, that carry back the mind to the butchery of the Roman Circus, and the martyrdom of the early Christians, the matador is called for, and you feel he comes almost upon an errand of mercy, to terminate so horrible a spectacle.

Armed with a bright rapier, a trusty, well-proved weapon of admirable temper, and with a flag in his left hand, he advances towards the president's box, and, bowing, obtains permission to exhibit his skill. Calmly taking his station right before the bull, he waves his crimson streamer across his eyes, an insult which in a moment concentrates every energy of departing life, and as the dying beast lowers his front for a final onset, the flag drops over his head, the death-stab passes through his spine, and, staggering like a drunken man, with streams of blood gushing forth from mouth and nostrils, the vast mass settles down like a sinking ship, and in a few moments all is still. The gaily-caparisoned mules come cantering in, the bull, and the horses he has slain, are dragged out at a gallop, the pools of blood are effaced by basket-loads of fresh sand, and, with a speed unknown

in other Spanish transactions, the ring is cleared for a fresh encounter.

Sometimes the matador is unlucky, or nervous, and, as we saw, does not succeed in giving the *coup de grâce*, until he has made several fruitless attempts. In such a case, no matter how great a favourite he may usually be, loud and angry are the taunting cries, that assail his ears from every quarter of the amphitheatre.

On this occasion, eight bulls, and fifteen or sixteen horses, were killed, and blood enough flowed to satisfy the most truculent Englishman, for the rest of his days. Anything more horrible, and utterly revolting, than the whole spectacle, I cannot conceive, and it seems to me impossible to overrate the brutalizing influence exercised by the bull-ring upon the nation at large. Nor do I wonder, after witnessing such an exhibition, and the frenzy of delight excited by its most shocking incidents, that in Spain even human life is lightly esteemed, among a population, to whom blood-shedding is an amusement, and the murderous use of the knife, on the smallest provocation, has ever been so fearfully common.

The operation of the same influence may be

traced in the domain of Art, where the most painful subjects are delineated with a reality, that leaves nothing to the imagination; and a Figure literally drenched with gore is one of the most customary representations of the suffering Redeemer, when the artist does not possess sufficient refinement to elevate his conception of the subject above the level of the national taste.

In the midst, however, of the horrors, that surrounded us, as we sat that afternoon in the Plaza de Toros, one incident occurred that afforded a momentary relief.

Six bulls had already been killed, and when the door opened for the seventh, he walked in with so pompous a solemnity of manner, worthy of the stateliest alderman in a civic procession, and looked so intensely peaceable, that he was welcomed with screams of laughter from every side. Had he been a deputation from the Peace Society, commissioned to remonstrate against so barbarous and cowardly a sport, he could not have acted his part better. He was a wise bull, the wisest of his race, and gave us all an eminent example of the magic potency of good-humour. A punster would affirm he must have come from the shores of the Pacific, so perfect

was his temper, so indomitable his love of peace.

Many and ingenious were the expedients employed to provoke him to pugnacity, but every one signally failed. Falstaff himself had not a more decided objection to fighting. He had evidently come into the ring, with his mind made up not to break the peace against any of her Majesty's subjects, no matter what provocation and insult were heaped upon him. His demeanour was a living comment on Horace's description of the model citizen, and the words, with one alteration, exactly represent him :—

“ Tenacem propositi *bovem*
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis Tyranni,”

(a line that will apply to the President of the day, as he looks down from his stately box on the arena,)

“ Mente quatit solidâ.”

Banderillas were tried in vain, and cracker after cracker exploded without eliciting the smallest spark of combativeness. In Falstaff's phrase, he was “cold-spur” all over; and so hopeless a subject for the ring did he appear, that dogs, auxiliaries frequently called in to rouse an inert, spiritless bull, were not intro-

duced on this occasion. The amphitheatre rose *en masse*, the fierce tumult of man's animal instincts, as they burst forth from that vast crowd, producing a savage grandeur, that made one shudder; and amid scornful cries of indignation, and a fluttering of handkerchiefs, "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa," demanded another bull.

Such a demand is irresistible; two oxen are turned into the ring (for without these no bull can be driven), and in their company, to *our* great delight, Don Pacifico disappeared, amid the laughter, and jeers of the audience, to live, let us hope, according to the story-book phrase, "happily ever afterwards," while the unfortunate proxy died in his stead.

It was really the greatest conceivable relief, when the whole affair came to an end, and with very much the same sensations, most people feel on going away from a dentist's at the conclusion of some unpleasant operation, we found ourselves once more in the Calle de Alcalá, nor do I think either of us will ever again take a seat within the enclosure of a bull-ring.

CHAPTER XII.

THE first time Lord Portarlington dined at the Embassy, he met Mr. Christopher Sykes, of Sledmere, who, having made a tour in the northern provinces, was now staying at Madrid, on his way to the South of Spain. As it turned out, on comparing notes, that Mr. Sykes' intended route coincided, in all material respects, with the ideas sketched out, in a somewhat indistinct outline, for our future proceedings, it was soon arranged we should all combine into one party, and travel together as far as Seville. This arrangement, by giving fixity and definitiveness to our plans, was a great advantage to us, as Mr. Sykes, having spent some weeks in the country, had carefully studied the various routes laid down in Ford, and had thus been able to settle what he purposed doing, with more distinctness than was yet possible in our case, amid the conflicting attractions presented

by the pages of that most agreeable author, drawing us simultaneously to every quarter of the compass.

It was therefore decided, that on Saturday, October 22nd, we should, please God, leave Madrid by rail for Toledo, and there commence our riding tour, taking Yuste and Placentia on our way over the Sierra Morena, down to Seville.

Our party would thus consist of six, including Swainson and Mr. Sykes' servant Elfick, with David Purkiss, an Englishman, very highly recommended by Ford, who had lived for some years at Madrid, and was perfectly acquainted with the language, and ways of the country.

From the first I took an interest in Purkiss, partly because he is one, like Dogberry, "that hath had losses ;" and partly because he is a descendant of the charcoal-burner of the same name, who carried the body of William Rufus from the New Forest to Winchester, and of whom local tradition reports, that, through all the intervening centuries, a direct heir has never once failed him, while the very same house and land, occupied by him at the time he paid the last act of piety to his Sovereign, is now (or was at least quite recently), in the possession of his family.

I little thought, while conversing on the sub-

ject with some ladies in the train, as we passed through the New Forest on my way to town, that in a short time one of that family would belong to our party, and for so considerable a period have so much to do with our daily wants and comforts. But, as that eminent moralist, Mrs. Gamp, remarks, "Sich is life!" and in travelling it is impossible to conjecture with whom one may come into contact.

Now that our plans had become settled, great preparations for the journey were immediately initiated, more especially in getting up such a costume for the road as would comply with the directions of Ford, who most urgently counsels travellers in Spain to dress like the natives; and while our talk was of Andalusian hats, of *fajas* (sashes for the waist, of silk, or worsted, universally worn by the peasantry) and *zamarras* (jackets of black lambskin), high boots, and buttons of silver filigree, we never went out of our apartment at the Peninsulares, without encountering some bootmaker, or tailor; one of whom, being painfully deaf, used to tax all the patience of the waiter, Alphonse, a good-natured Frenchman from Bourdeaux, while he tried to convince him of the various short-comings of his tailoring, which, like a genuine Spaniard, he

considered absolutely faultless, simply because it was his own.

I alone ventured to disobey Ford's injunctions, though various were the arguments employed in persuading me to adopt some portion, at least, of Spanish clerical costume for my travelling dress, and much ingenuity, and perseverance were expended in recommending the use of the enormous shovel-hat, not much less than a yard from end to end, which crowns the pericranium of a Spanish priest. Feeling, however, that, apart from the weighty consideration of expense, our group would be none the worse, in an artistic point of view, for a little toning down, I was quite satisfied with my ordinary garb, and preferred the freedom and ease of my old battered wide-awake, to the ponderous dignity of a clerical *sombrero*.

Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes thought it best to purchase horses at Madrid, not wishing to trust to the contingencies of the road; and for those who can afford it, and have fully made up their minds to use their purchase long enough to work out the price, a period of some two or three months, such a plan is unquestionably the best, because it involves no greater expense,

than the hire of a horse for a journey of that duration.

A mule, however, is on the whole the more serviceable animal; not only on account of his greater powers of endurance, and freedom from ailments, but because, in many of the out-of-the-way districts, the bridle-track is often so narrow, that his smaller hoof finds "ample room and verge enough," for safe action, while the broader foot of a horse, as I afterwards used to remark, will sometimes absolutely stick fast in deep holes, so that he extricates himself with no small difficulty, and occasionally loses a shoe.

Many were the consultations held on the matter of horse-flesh, and kindred subjects, with the coachman at the Embassy, who gave us useful hints for the road, highly necessary in such a country as Spain, where the diet, and general management of horses are so different from what we are accustomed to in England. Being a Yorkshireman, he regarded Mr. Sykes with a deference and respect, it was pleasant to remark, in consequence of his being the son of one standing so high in public estimation, as the venerable Sir Tatton Sykes.

We spent a morning at the Armeria Real, one

of the finest armouries in the world, with poor Mr. Southwell for our cicerone. I never saw anything in the least approaching the variety, and exquisite workmanship of its contents, the only drawback to our enjoyment of them arising (as usual) from the impossibility of doing justice to more than a few objects, during the time we were able to stay there.

The room, being long and narrow, 227 feet by 36, is admirably adapted for its purpose, and the effect, on entering, is most striking, when, after mounting a dark staircase, you emerge into that stately gallery, and find yourself in the presence of those memorials of Spain's prosperous days (when her troops were the best in the world), stretching out before you in long perspective. Around us hung armour of every shape and device, from the plainest suit of the common man-at-arms, up to the profusely-ornamented panoply of noblemen and princes; while lances and spears, swords and pikes, muskets and pistols, gleamed in bright array on every side.

Viewed simply as an accumulation of art-objects (if so newly-coined a phrase may be introduced into the company of so many representatives of antiquity), this collection of warlike plenishing is marvellous; nor can anything pro-

duce a more forcible conviction of the all-pervading influence of Art during the Renaissance period, than the singular fact, that in the very region most hostile (as is supposed) to her very existence—the battle-field—she has achieved some of her most enduring triumphs. The warrior of that day went out to battle, not only protected from many of its dangers, but clothed with apparel of almost imperishable beauty; and Vulcan's craft became again, as in Homeric days, the handmaid of poetry and grace.

If any would fully appreciate the beauty, and refinement of ancient armour, let him lay the headpiece of a modern Guardsman, with its common-place ornamentation, and device, which are worthy of a coppersmith's invention, alongside some helmets of the fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, all rich with exquisite chasing, enamel, damascene-work, and gold, and he will not be long in perceiving the difference between the results of mechanical contract-work, and the creations of living Art.

To the Madrid Armoury, however, an interest of even a higher nature attaches. Those magnificent suits, on which the armourers of Milan, and Germany, exhausted the choicest resources of their skill, are not mere creations of Art,

serving no other purpose than to give proof of her boundless powers. They have all done actual service in the midst

“ of plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue ; ”

and were worn, not by nameless soldiers, but by such men of renown, as the Great Captain, Gonzalvo de Cordova, Columbus, Cortez, Charles V., and his son, the victor of Lepanto, whose names are consecrated in history.

The room contained besides a goodly display of banners, many of them won from the Infidel at Granada and Lepanto ; with two or three Union-jacks, taken, we conjectured, from Nelson at Vera Cruz, the sight of which, in the land of Talavera, Salamanca, and Vittoria, made us smile.

We took a turn afterwards through the royal stables, chiefly in the hope of seeing the carriages, which are said to be well worth inspection ; for the series descends in unbroken succession from the earliest date of state-coaches. We did not, however, succeed in our object, it not being the right day.

The stables would give a terrible shock to the notions of an English groom, being kept in a

very slovenly manner, and from their site and defective ventilation, they must be insufferably hot in summer. They contain a large number of fine horses, and mules, with the name of each animal painted over his stall. One of the mules, the most vicious beast in the stud, was marked out for public opprobrium, in this land of the Inquisition, by the title of "Protestant"—a master-stroke of satire, which penetrated us three Englishmen to the very soul. To be compared to a mule at all, is not complimentary to the feelings of "Britishers," with whom these mongrel quadrupeds are no favourites. But to be condemned to a place in the same category with the most vicious of the race was so perfectly annihilating, that, humiliated and crest-fallen, what could we do, but turn away and depart in silence, sadder and wiser men !

After so severe a blow to our religious feelings, who that has the spirit and heart of a Briton, will wonder, that we had no desire left for going through the interior of the royal palace, not knowing what further outrage to our national pride we might meet with there ?

To prove, however, that, in spite of such aggravating provocation, we bore no malice, I will just add, that the exterior is imposing,

and the situation admirably adapted for setting it off to every advantage. But in winter it seems more fit to be the palace of an ice-king, than the abode of flesh-and-blood royalty; and so fearfully exposed is it to the blasts sweeping down at that season from the Guadarrama mountains, that sentinels stationed at one point have been frozen to death, while on duty. In cold weather they are changed every ten minutes, and when its severity increases seriously, they are altogether withdrawn, and Spanish royalty is left to the guardianship of its own circumambient divinity!

CHAPTER XIII.

TUESDAY and Wednesday, the 18th and 19th of October, were devoted to visiting the Escorial. We had intended to have gone there by one of the diligences, which pass daily through the adjoining village, on their way to Segovia. But, on making inquiries, we found they started at such inconvenient hours, that it became necessary to hire a carriage on purpose, going one day and returning the next.

The weather, which, during the previous week, was rainy and tempestuous, had now become all we could desire, and the sun shone forth in his brightness, as we crossed the Manzanares, Madrid's only stream, its shallow current beset by hundreds of washerwomen, glad to take advantage of so fine a day, while its banks were sheeted, far and near, with linen of all sorts, our own probably contributing its

contingent to make up that miscellaneous collection of drapery.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Madrid the road is execrable, and its broad surface, seamed with holes, and ruts, makes any pace quicker than a walk a perilous venture to the bones. As the road improves, on clearing the suburbs, the country becomes deplorable, and we soon found ourselves surrounded by a wild waste, exceeding, in aridity and utter absence of trees and vegetation, anything we had yet encountered—a desert, in fact, of baked earth and sand, with nothing to give it variety but rain-worn, calcined ravines, bestridden here and there, as the highway approaches them, by those characteristic features of a Castilian landscape—bridges without a stream. Not that their channels are always waterless; for during the tremendous down-pours of the rainy season, the sun-scorched *barranco*, “where no water is,” becomes in a few hours the bed of a roaring torrent, which, if left unbridged, would for the time render the road perfectly impassable.

The drive through such a blank, where the most patient and hopeful of tourists looks in vain for anything to attract his attention, is tedious to a degree; and as the road ascends a great

part of the thirty miles between Madrid and the Escorial, you cannot even enjoy the satisfaction of shortening the tedium of such a journey by going fast. When, however, we had performed rather more than half the distance, the monotony of the scene was somewhat mitigated by the first glimpse of the Escorial, of which we caught sight on reaching the summit of a long ascent; and though we must still have been some twelve or fourteen miles off, yet even there its vast size asserted itself, as it rose, a gaunt, frowning pile, against the mountain side, forbidding, more than inviting, our nearer approach.

It was quite a relief, when, having at length traversed those dreary plains, we entered the royal domain, about two leagues from the Escorial, though for a considerable time we had nothing better to look at than the walls of the park, *El Pardo la Zarzuela*, with an occasional glimpse of the ilices scattered here and there, in straggling groups over its surface. This total want of interest in the route to the Escorial tells immensely to its advantage, and prepares the mind unconsciously for a favourable impression.

For a long time after you have entered the

royal domain, on the side towards Madrid, the building itself remains concealed, owing to the inequality of the ground; and when, wearied with that monotonous drive, you begin to feel impatient to see something, the park wall suddenly terminates, the road traverses an open space, studded with primeval boulder-stones, and before you have had time to realize the transition, you find yourself face to face with the eighth wonder of the world!

In a moment we were out of the carriage. Mounting the grassy pedestal of an enormous boulder, which, weather-stained, and lichen-marked, towered like a monarch over the rest, we commanded at one glance the whole extent of the south front, and the eye, fatigued so long with barrenness, rested gladly on the long-drawn ranges of terrace-garden, and the groves that fringe the precincts of the palace; while, as if to greet us with pleasant welcome, the mellow glow of sunset burst forth, diffusing an atmosphere of beauty on every side, and casting upon tower and dome a warmth, and richness of colouring, that overcame, for the moment, the chilling sternness of that granite pile.

We could not possibly have seen it to greater advantage. Not only was the whole landscape

bathed in sunshine, but the stately avenues of poplar beneath the terrace, were all golden with the tints of autumn, while along the slopes of the westward hills gleamed many a hue from copse-wood, fern, and lava-coloured soil, contrasting most effectively with the sober green of the ilex in the park below.

All this beauty took us completely by surprise; for most descriptions of the Escorial represent it as environed by the bleakest of landscapes, extending to its very walls, in unmitigated barrenness.

When, however, having entered its vast courts, now silent and untrodden, we began to examine the building more closely, I must confess my disappointment. Prepared though we were to admire, no amount of prepossession in its favour could transmute such unmistakable ugliness into beauty. Its gridiron ground-plan (an inspiration of pedantry and superstition combined) is fatal to simplicity and grandeur of design, and although no building of its vast proportions can be altogether destitute of a certain grandiose majesty, you still feel it has nothing to recommend it to your admiration, beyond mere bulk.

The windows, of which it is said to contain

about 4000, are positively hideous, the least objectionable of them having the form of those in a modern dwelling-house, while the upper stories are lighted by apertures, that resemble nothing so much as the port-holes in a man-of-war.

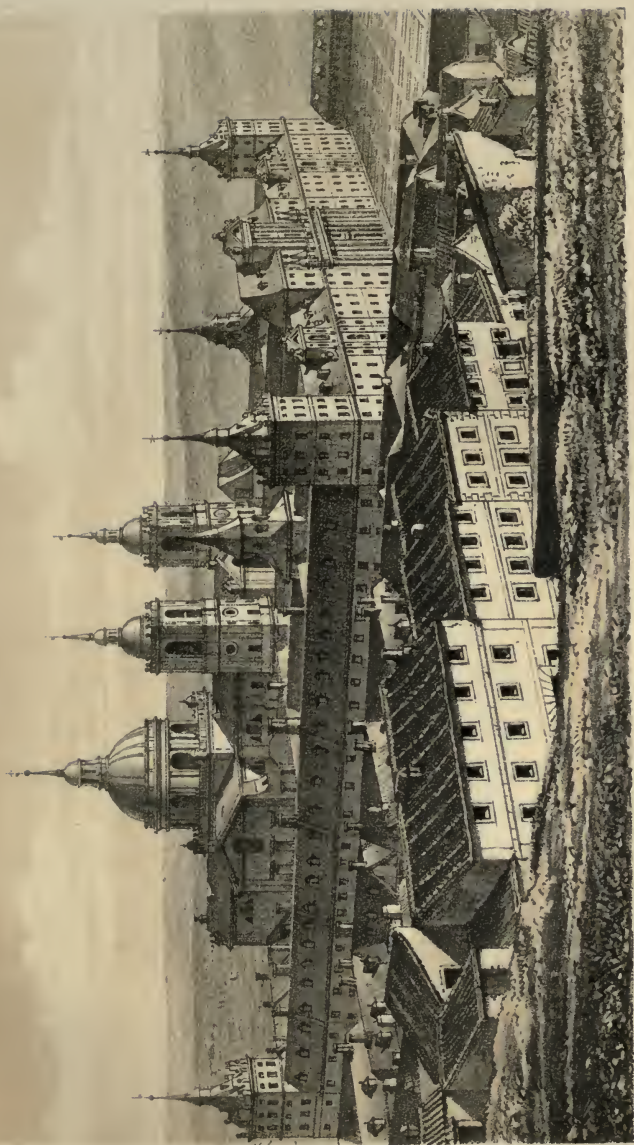
In fact, when I thought of the sums spent upon it, not less, it is said, than £10,000,000, and the different results that an architect of the 13th century would have achieved with such means, I could only lament so golden an opportunity had been thrown away, and a building worthy of that magnificent site had not been erected, which, not owing its effectiveness to sheer mass, would have combined in harmonious proportions those united elements of grandeur and beauty, characteristic of the best Pointed Architecture.

The effect on the mind is simply oppressive, without one grain of the elevating influence, that animates the creations of the great mediæval builders. Nor does this impression wear away, as you become more familiar with the various features of the edifice, and next day it was as much felt by us, as when we first trod its courts.

The situation, however, is superb. Backed by a noble mountain, an offshoot of the Guadarrama range, the Escorial stands in an attitude

of observation (so to speak), surveying the whole land, with the stamp of Spanish royalty, cold, ponderous, and stately, marked indelibly on all its features, while its mixed character of convent and palace, typifies the intimate connection between the Throne and the Church, existing in the days of its founder.

As we did not arrive at the Escorial until sunset, we made no attempt that evening to explore any portion of its interior, contenting ourselves with looking at it from various points of view, while the deepening gloom gradually descending on tower, and dome, veiled its ungainliness and lack of beauty, and imparted to the silent, darkling pile, a solemn, unearthly aspect, that harmonized perfectly with its double destination, as a sepulchre of Kings, and a refuge from the vanities of the world.



THE ESCORIAL.

CHAPTER XIV.

WE lodged at a very tidy little inn in the village, and our dinner introduced us, for the first time in Spain, to fresh pork, which was to be henceforward our almost daily *pièce de résistance*. The village, which stands under the very shadow of the Escorial, though small, seems to abound in posadas and lodging-houses, being a favourite resort for the gentry of Madrid during the intense heats of summer, when its fresh mountain-air and comparative coolness, make the neighbourhood a delicious retreat from the sweltering temperature of the capital.

In winter it must be frightfully bleak, exposed as it is to those terrific blasts from the Guadarrama chain, which, according to all accounts, can be scarcely less formidable than the hurricanes of the Andes. Stories almost incredible are told of the violence, with which the wind sweeps down upon the Escorial through a gap in the

mountains, to the north-west, eddying through its courts like some whirlpool of air, and upsetting everything it encounters. Ford mentions that upon one occasion an Ambassador's coach, a vehicle of some substance and weight in the last century, was turned topsy-turvy by one of those rushing mighty winds. In fact, so much did the inmates suffer from this cause, that in 1770 a subterraneous gallery, communicating with the village, was constructed by the monks. The Duc de St. Simon, who, in 1715, spent some part of the winter at the Escorial, speaks of its intense cold, and yet, though it froze fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four, the sun was so powerful from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., that it was too hot for walking, while the sky was at all times perfectly serene and cloudless.

Next morning, taking my customary stroll before breakfast, and passing westward through the grove of English elms, planted by Philip, I presently found myself in front of the southwestern façade, and on the brink of a magnificent granite tank, some 400 feet long by 200 wide, spacious as the pools of Solomon, and fed by a perennial rill, whose pleasant murmur alone broke the silence of the scene.

It was a lovely morning, the atmosphere of

crystal transparency, and the landscape flooded with unbroken sunshine; nor did I wonder, as so many have done, while I walked up and down the warm, sequestered terrace, that Philip should have chosen such a spot for his home.

Whatever may be said against the dreariness of the road from Madrid, the immediate vicinity of the Escorial, as we saw it, is extremely beautiful. Close at hand, as I have already mentioned, rises a mountain range, highly picturesque in form and outline, and of a colouring singularly rich and vivid; while many of the upland slopes are clothed with thickets, and bosky patches of copse-wood, their autumnal tints thrown out into bright relief by the dark gray rocks cropping out here and there, along the face of the mountain. Immediately below, lies the park we skirted on our arrival, with its dark foliage of *ilex*, and *quercus robur*, sombre-hued amid the glories of the Fall, while eastward a tiny lake, where, in bygone days, the monks used to catch the finest tench in the world, glistens—the eye of the landscape—under the early sunbeams.

It was sad to see the fruit-trees on the terrace walls, once tended so carefully, now drooping in straggling, unpruned neglect, each in its niche

or alcove, with folding-doors to shelter it from the severity of the winter, as in this elevated situation even peach and apricot trees cannot exist without such protection.

Looking westward, you perceive near the base of the mountain, at a distance of more than a mile from the palace, the *Silla del Rey*, or "King's Seat," where Philip used to sit and watch the progress of the Escorial. Out of the same mountain, all the stone required for the building was quarried, and transported to the site along a platform of wood, which bridged over the intervening space. This fabric, a remarkable work for that age, was constructed with a gentle slope towards the Escorial, so as to lessen the draught; and such was its size, that when its purpose had been served by the completion of the palace, it was removed with very great difficulty.

Having enjoyed the tranquillity and sunshine of the terrace for a good hour, I set out on my return to the inn. Wishing to see the other side of the Escorial, I descended into an orchard lying under the terrace, where some peasants were digging potatoes, and made for the high wall by which it is bounded, hoping to find some friendly outlet in that direction. In the

midst of the orchard I was attacked by a dog belonging to one of the potato-diggers, and having no stick (which, by the way, is always a desirable companion for a country walk in Spain, where dogs abound), I was obliged to have recourse to Dr. Parr's expedient, and *inflicted* my eye on the foe, so as to keep him from a breach of the peace, until his master called him off, which he did with provoking deliberation.

I looked in vain for gate or door, by which to make my exit, and, as the wall was about twelve feet high, I gladly availed myself of a young tree, which grew *convanient*, as an Irishman would say, and soon clambered up to the top, only to find myself, however, confronted by a species of *chevaux de frise*, consisting of a thick stratum of dry brambles, with an upper crust of large stones to keep it firm, placed there, evidently with no small trouble, by the owner, for the safe-keeping of his apples and pears.

It required no great foresight to perceive that a yard or two of this coping would inevitably fall on my unlucky pate, were I to drop down to the other side from the spot where I then stood, and the peasants showed they anticipated some such result, by the eagerness with which

they drew near to see the sport. Having, however, in my school-boy days, acquired, among other useful accomplishments, the knack of walking on a black-thorn hedge without coming to grief like the immortal King of Sicily, I surmised their benevolent anticipations were not quite certain to be realized; and proceeding with as much caution as a man treading among eggs, I cleared in due time the forty or fifty yards of wall, over which the brambles and stones extended, and having made my bow to the select audience before whom I had to exhibit, in acknowledgment of their polite attentions, I dropped down comfortably on the other side, without bringing destruction on my own head; though I almost felt as if I owed an apology to the expectant potato-diggers, for so ruthlessly disappointing them of their hoped-for entertainment.

Breakfast became a pleasant episode between my morning ramble and our exploration of the Escorial, a very formidable undertaking, containing as it does, according to the guide-books, a palace, a convent, two colleges, for regulars and seculars respectively, three chapter-houses, and three libraries, with more halls, dormitories, refectories, and infirmaries, than I care to in-

troduce into my pages. There are no fewer than eighty staircases, and some one gifted with a turn for statistics, has calculated, that to visit every individual room, and to go up and down each staircase and corridor, would occupy four entire days, and carry the unhappy wight (should any such zealot for sight-seeing ever be discovered) over a distance of about a hundred and twenty English miles.

We meekly surrendered ourselves to the disposal of our guide, and he took us up and down so many staircases, along such a maze of corridors, and cloisters, and through such an endless succession of courts, and quadrangles, that ere long we subsided into the condition of machines, with the sensations of a vertiginous mill-horse, and the wayworn leg-weariness of the wandering Jew.

We began with the Church. In spite of Ford's eulogy, it gave me little pleasure, from its pagan, classical style, and the depressing, joyless influences brooding over its cold interior, which has more the air of a vast crypt, dedicated to the dark mysteries of some heathen superstition, than of a temple consecrated to the worship of Him, "Who brought life, and

immortality to light by the Gospel." At the same time it certainly possesses the merit of massive simplicity, and the noble flight of steps, in polished marble, ascending to the high altar, produces a very striking effect.

Before the French invasion, the Church teemed with treasures of Art—sacred vessels of gold and silver—multitudes of shrines—reliquaries—and a tabernacle of such exquisite workmanship, that it used to be spoken of as worthy to be one of the ornaments of the celestial altar.

All these were destroyed by La Houssaye's troopers, when they occupied the Escorial in 1808, by way of giving vent to their national feeling respecting the battle of St. Quentin, where the Spaniards, with the aid of some 8000 English, in addition to other foreigners, managed to defeat the French, on the Feast of St. Laurence, August 10th, 1557, the interval of two centuries and a half, which one might have supposed capable of serving as a sort of Statute of Limitation, not being a sufficient lapse of time (apparently), to erase the defeat out of the memories of Frenchmen, who are always sorer under a beating,

than any other nation, and cling to its recollection with a tenacity, that will neither forget nor forgive.

The Escorial sustained a still greater loss in 1837, during the Carlist war, when about a hundred of the choicest paintings were removed for safety's sake to the Museo at Madrid, where, being accessible to all comers daily, to be studied at leisure, they now afford a thousand-fold more gratification to lovers of pictures, and proportionate increase of benefit to Art, than they ever produced while lying entombed in the remote Escorial.

It is hardly necessary to mention here, that the building was erected by Philip II., in accomplishment of a vow addressed to Saint Lawrence, (the Spanish San Lorenzo,) during the battle of St. Quentin, and that the form of a gridiron, in commemoration of the Saint's martyrdom on an instrument of that description, was adopted for its ground-plan, in order to do him further honour.

We descended into the royal vault, called the Panteon, an octagon of polished marble, standing exactly under the high altar, and dark as Erebus. St. Simon says, "it frightened him by a sort of horror and majesty," and it has

far more the appearance of a tomb intended for them "that have no hope," than "a gate of death" leading to a joyful resurrection. It is the very place to have inspired those lines of Gray, which, though professedly written amid the comparatively cheerful associations of a sunshiny English churchyard, are fraught with the influences that hover around this royal charnel-house.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour—

* * * * *

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?"

The vault contains twenty-six niches, most of them being tenanted by the dust and ashes of kings, and such of their queens, as had sons to ascend the throne, none others being admissible into this last stronghold of Spanish etiquette, where even in death the proprieties are strictly observed by the separation of the sexes, the males lying on one side, and the females on the other. The first niche is allotted to Charles V., the earliest occupant of this grim abode, his remains having been brought here

from Yuste. His son is the next to find a tomb within the walls of his own foundation, and then, in historical order, follows the long succession of Austrian and Bourbon nonentities, elevated by Spanish ceremonial almost to the rank of demigods, only to come at last to the common end of all men.

St. Simon gives a curious account of two other sepulchral chambers, which we did not see. "In a separate place near, but not on the same floor, and resembling a library, the bodies of children, and queens, who have had no posterity, are ranged. A third place, a sort of antechamber to the last named, is called 'a rotting-room.' In this third room nothing is to be seen except four bare walls, with a table in the middle. The walls being very thick, openings are made in them, where the bodies are placed; each body has an opening to itself, which is afterwards walled up. When it is thought the corpse has been walled up sufficiently long to be free from odour, the wall is opened, the body taken out, and put in a coffin, which allows a portion of it to be seen towards the feet. This coffin is then covered with a rich stuff, and carried into the adjoining room."

All that is usually shown of the Escorial we saw, the greater part, however, I must confess, with very little interest. What pleased us most were the royal apartments, very pleasant sunny rooms, of moderate, habitable size, simply furnished in general, with here and there some article, a cabinet, or piece of marqueterie, of regal costliness. Some of the rooms contained a few good pictures, while many were hung with the finest tapestry I ever saw, chiefly of Spanish manufacture, and representing for the most part hunting and shooting subjects, full of animation, and admirably coloured.

I was particularly interested in the Sala des Batallas, "the Gallery of Battles," a long corridor opening upon one of the patios, so called because its walls are covered with battle-pieces, in fresco, the most conspicuous being the engagement of La Higuera, where the Spaniards, under Alvaro de Luna, defeated the Moors, in June, 1431. It is curious to observe, that in this painting both Christians and Infidels are represented as fighting under the crescent, that having been the "canting" crest of De Luna, borne by him on account of his family name, for Luna signifies "the moon" in Spanish as well as in Latin.

This fresco, copied, it is said, from an older one found in the Alcazar at Segovia, is well worth studying, on account of its costumes, armour, and other details. The battles of Pavia, St. Quentin, and Lepanto, with many famous sieges in the Netherlands, are delineated on a large scale, and had not the inexorable necessity of going the entire round of sight-seeing prevented me, I would gladly have spent some time in becoming fully acquainted with these most interesting illustrations of history.

By way of refreshment after lionizing that huge building, we longed to turn out upon the terraces, where the sun was shining most attractively, but this was not allowed.

We were much struck with the parterres of box-wood, in geometrical patterns, into which the terraces are laid out. The box having attained a height of two or three feet is kept carefully trimmed on the top, and at the sides, and with its evergreen foliage glistening in the sunshine, an excellent effect is produced, making one insensible to the absence of flowers.

Altogether the exterior of the Escorial, with its gardens and surrounding scenery, pleased us much more than any portion of its interior; during a fine autumn it would be a very pleasant

place to stay at, and there are many excursions to be made in the neighbouring mountains, which I longed to explore.

Both our time, and powers of endurance, were now exhausted, and after a hasty luncheon we set off for Madrid, where we arrived early enough to dine, and spend a very pleasant evening, with Mr. Augustus Lumley, the Secretary to the Embassy.

CHAPTER XV.

OCTOBER 22nd. In spite of all the kindness and hospitality received from our countrymen at Madrid, we were not at last altogether sorry to leave, as the weather had broken up, the streets were deluged with daily torrents of rain, and chilling blasts from the Guadarrama mountains assailed us at every turn. In going south we hoped for sunnier skies, and looked forward with great delight to our ride through "the untrodden ways," of wild Estremadura. Provision for the journey had been laid in from the stores of the Café l'Hardy, and a pair of formidable-looking panniers were filled to the brim, with a miscellaneous cargo of tea, coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, mustard, wine, cannisters of preserved meat, and soup, patés and hams, with a supplement of tea and coffee pots, tin jugs, knives, forks, and spoons. To our inexperienced eyes

these preparations seemed altogether extravagant, and the high prices, which make Madrid the most expensive capital in Europe, swelled the bill to an amount not pleasant to contemplate. A week's travel, however, convinced us that if any error had been committed in the commissariat department, it was certainly not on the side of excess ; and many a time and oft, while wending our way through *dehesas* and *despoblados*, where edibles are unknown, did we wish some beneficent fairy would transport us for a couple of hours to the well-replenished café of the Calle de San Geronimo, that we might turn to account our newly-acquired experience, by doubling our original supplies, and by adding a few items, which seldom find a place in carpet-bag or portmanteau of a tourist, though by no means superfluous to travellers in the Peninsula.

The rail conveyed us to Toledo, where we proposed taking to the saddle, and riding by Yuste, Placentia, and Merida, to Seville. Spanish railways do not excel in speed, and we were more than three hours in doing about forty miles. The country is a mere lifeless expanse of arid plain, till you come to the royal domain of Aranjuez, on the banks of the Tagus, which

is pretty and well wooded. Here the court spends part of the spring.

Toledo is very strikingly situated on a cluster of granite hills (of course since Rome set the fashion they are called seven), through whose bosom the Tagus has cloven a deep ravine-like channel surrounding three sides of the town. It was now a brimming turbid stream, after the late rains. I never saw any large town which gave me more the idea of compression than Toledo, as if, after its completion, some unheard-of power had forced it into half its original compass. Its streets never run straight ahead, but turn and twist in all directions, after the fashion of eastern towns, and have more the appearance of slits and crevices between the houses, than of open thoroughfares. On the land-side it is still encircled by Moorish walls, and as on our way into the town we passed under a tower with gate and portcullis yet entire, and pierced by a most graceful horseshoe arch, we seemed to be at once carried back to the days of old, when the Moor was master there. It was not at all what I had expected to see, exhibiting few characteristics of a peaceful cathedral town, the see of a Primate, and the centre of ecclesiastical affairs to a great kingdom. The houses

have almost the look of fortified dwellings, and the streets are far better contrived for keeping out an enemy, than for giving peaceable citizens a free passage to and fro on their lawful avocations. In fact had we not known it was Toledo, it would have been easy to imagine we were entering some frontier town among the mountains, whose gates were for ever hearing "the din of battle bray." It is a most uncomfortable place to go about; if you walk, your feet are tortured by vile pavement; if you venture to take a carriage, a rare sight at Toledo, your nervous system is shaken to pieces. The only vehicle we saw was the omnibus, that conveyed us from the station, and its course through the streets, as it dashed madly round corners, and darted up steep slopes of pavement, more nearly resembled the jerks and hops of a cracker, than the sedate movements common to omnibuses in other parts of the world.

The town is crowded with objects of interest to the ecclesiologist, antiquarian, student of history, architect, and artist; out of which ordinary visitors find a difficulty in making a selection. We were, however, happily spared this perplexity, in having Mr. Sykes for our companion, who has not only quite the gift

of finding out what is best worth seeing, combined with a thorough love of Art, but having spent a day there the week before, he consequently knew how to employ our limited time to the best advantage. Few places can boast such an interesting array of religious buildings, Jewish, Moorish, and Christian ; and, as we visited one after another, we could only long for more leisure, and a larger share of that inexhaustible energy and zeal, so indispensable for conscientious sight-seeing.

Our first visit was to the well-known synagogues. Judging from the general character of these buildings, the Toledan Jews must have been a very prosperous community, and it is a singular circumstance in the history of a people, who in most countries have been politically so uninfluential, that upon two occasions they were the means of changing the ownership of the city—in April, 712, when they opened the gates to the Moors under Tarik Ibn Zeyyad ; and again, May 25, 1085, when they admitted Alonzo VI. One of these synagogues, now called Santa Maria La Blanca, dates, it is said, from the ninth century, and, being the work of a Moorish architect, is built in his native style. It consists of a nave

and double aisles on each side, formed by rows of horse-shoe arches, rising from short massive columns with arabesque capitals. Above the keystone of each central row of arches, a blank unpierced arcade runs the whole length of the nave; the east end contains a recess, which used to be the Holy of Holies. What interested me most of all was the wooden roof, not only as being composed of cedars of Lebanon, but from being the first of the kind I ever remember to have seen on the Continent, where, as every one knows, vaulted roofs are well-nigh universal, wooden ones being almost confined to England. Fergusson remarks that the Spanish Arabs never seem to have paid attention to vaulting in stone and similar material, but usually constructed their roofs of wood, painted and carved, or of stucco. The other synagogue, called *El Transito*, is simply an oblong room of considerable dimensions, which, in its artesonado roof and cornices, retains traces of gorgeous ornamentation, with latticed galleries for women let into the side-wall, about half-way between the floor and the ceiling. This was built "at the sole expense" of a Jewish millionaire, Samuel Levi, treasurer to Pedro the Cruel.

We now varied the routine of sight-seeing,

and walked to the top of the highest hill within the walls, which is crowned with the shell of a fine palace in the Renaissance style, built chiefly by Charles V., and completed by his son. It is called the Alcazar, having been erected on the site of the old Moorish palace, of which, as far as we could discover, no remains exist. The situation is truly regal. Throned on a platform of rock, far above every surrounding object, it commands Toledo, "the crown of Spain, and the light of the whole world," as old chronicles style the city, and overlooks the broad stream of the Tagus, as it sweeps downward towards the plain. The proportions of the palace are magnificent, and the grand staircase, on which it is said no fewer than three architects were employed at different times, has "ample room and verge enough" to admit a coach and six. The façade is enriched with medallions, containing heads, figures, and other ornaments of the cinque-cento style. On the side next the Tagus are some of the finest machicolations I ever saw, projecting from the surface of the wall with a depth and boldness, that produced admirable effects of light and shade; these are probably the remains of some building erected after the capture of the place

in 1085. The view across the stern-looking hills, that hem in the river, forcibly reminded both Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes of the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; indeed their recollections of eastern travel are constantly awakened by the scenes through which we are now passing.

On descending the hill, we went to the splendid Franciscan convent, San Juan de los Reyes, founded by Ferdinand and Isabella, to commemorate their victory at Toro over Alonzo of Portugal, in 1476. Fergusson calls this building the gem of that age, assigning to it the same position in Spanish pointed architecture, that Henry VII.'s chapel occupies in English, with even greater richness of detail. The portal was erected by Philip II. On the outside of the church, at the east end, hang hundreds of iron chains, taken from the limbs of the Christian captives found in Granada, when it was surrendered by Boabdil in 1492, and in their present position they may well be regarded both as thank-offerings to God, and as emblems of conquest. The whole building suffered fearfully during the French occupation, and wears now a most dismal air of desolation and neglect. Indeed, I must confess, no part gave

me so much pleasure as the cloisters, which, in their former glory, must have been an enchanting retreat; even now they are invested with a peculiar attractiveness, and we spent a most pleasant hour within their precincts, while reposing from the fatigues of sight-seeing, and eating fruit under the shade of vine and fig-tree.

But, after all, the pride of Toledo is the Cathedral, which is indeed "glorious within," not merely from the beauty of its architecture, but from what in the present day is much more rare, the profuse magnificence of its decorations and furniture, in retablos, painted glass, sculpture, wood-carving, plate, and ornamental iron-work. The wood-carving of the choir alone would occupy days to examine it worthily; every stall is a study, and we turned from panel and moulding, and miserere, with a feeling of utter helplessness at our inability to master the myriad marvels that surrounded us on every side. Then there were "glorious tomes, bound in half-inch oak, or chestnut, armed and knobbed, and studded with wrought brass or silver, scaled tortoise-fashion with metallic lappets, and bound together by the hogskin back, relics of boars that had fattened themselves plentifully

in great forests of ilex and cork-tree; volumes that have initials of marvellous splendour, with flowers and fruitage curling down the side of the page, or symbolizing in their very pattern the meaning of the Epistle, or Gospel, which they prelude."

The Retablo, a species of Reredos in wood, carved and richly ornamented with gilding and colour, which seems peculiar to Spain, is here a perfect concentration of beauty: though unfortunately from the great height to which it runs, and the "dim religious light" that pervades the whole interior of the Cathedral, some portions of the five compartments into which it is divided were almost invisible. These run from base to summit, and each contains three subjects from the principal events in our Lord's life. Executed in 1500, it is a masterpiece of art, and I longed first of all to illuminate it with a flood of light sufficiently powerful to reveal its minutest details, and then to have it photographed for the benefit of dear friends at home.

At the back of the choir runs a series of most elaborate Gothic screens three tiers high, extending (no doubt) all round originally; behind the altar, however, they have been cut

away to make room for a trumpery modern monument. There are besides some exquisite bits of the best pointed period, particularly an arcade running along the transepts, which would be an ornament to any building, and a triforium round the choir, with a sculptured figure under each arch, which Fergusson notices as an instance of a very natural tendency in Spanish architects, to introduce Moorish features into their designs.

The Cathedral consists, as usual in Spain, of a double choir, with transepts, nave, and double aisles on each side, to which are attached several chapels of most sumptuous description.

None of them, however, exceed in interest the Mozarabic chapel, built and endowed by Cardinal Ximenes, in 1512, for the daily use of the Mozarabic Liturgy, the original communion-service of Spain. It is said to take its name from *Must-Arab*, being used by persons, who mixed with, and tried to imitate the Arab, that is, the Spanish Christians, who under Moorish rule enjoyed full toleration of their religion, having as many as six Churches in Toledo alone. This Liturgy, which Palmer derives from the ancient Gallican, is written in Latin, and is copious enough to fill two folios.

Its construction is very peculiar, differing widely from most of the Western Liturgies, especially from the Roman and Ambrosian, being highly poetical, full of antithesis, which sometimes becomes almost rhetorical, and with whole passages that read very much like portions of sermons introduced where prayers might be looked for; it abounds moreover with adaptations from Scripture, especially from the Psalter.

Ford says it was re-established by Ximenes, "to give the Vatican a hint, that Spain had not forgotten her former spiritual independence." This is extremely probable, and one cannot imagine a more legitimate mode of protesting against Roman usurpation, than the restoration of this ancient ritual, which is still used every day in the Mozarabic Chapel at Toledo, in compliance with the terms of the Cardinal's endowment. But it seems to me, that another motive of a more private nature may have exercised additional influence upon the Cardinal's mind, in his restoration of that ritual, and as the whole subject of Liturgies is beginning to attract attention, I may be permitted to notice the point more at length. .

The religious services of the Spanish Chris-

tians, received, as we have seen, no material interruption from their Moorish conquerors; and in modern phrase, they were still allowed to worship God according to their own conscience. But the Roman See, having succeeded during Charlemagne's reign in substituting the Roman Liturgy for the Gallican, attempted to introduce it into Spain also, in place of the native Mozarabic ritual, which is known to have existed as early as the sixth century. This attempt succeeded in Aragon about 1060; but in Castile and Leon not till 1074, when, through the influence of Gregory the Seventh, Alphonso the Sixth decreed the abolition of the Mozarabic Liturgy, very much against the wishes of both clergy and people; in fact he did not effect the introduction of the Roman Liturgy, till he had threatened its opponents with confiscation and death. It would appear that Roderic Ximenes was then Archbishop of Toledo, and in his history he relates how, while everyone lamented and wept over the loss of their ancient ritual, which even the Infidels had spared, it passed into a proverb, *Quo Volunt Reges, Vadunt Leges*, which may be paraphrased, "What the King willeth, that the law filleth."

Now, from utter ignorance of Spanish genealogy, I cannot say that both these Archbishops, though bearing the same name, belonged to the great family of Cisneros; if they did, as I will venture to surmise until better informed, do we not here discover an additional motive for the pains taken by the great Cardinal to ensure the perpetual preservation of the ancient national Liturgy?

The Cathedral contains painted glass of exquisite beauty, filling every window, if my memory does not deceive me, and we saw it precisely at the moment for setting off its effect to the highest advantage. It was late on a Sunday afternoon, and darkness was gradually stealing over the whole interior, so that you could hardly discern the dusky forms that passed silently to and fro over the marble floor. The windows alone stood out bright and glorious, in luminous contrast to the general gloom; and as the beams of the westering sun came streaming through, lighting up the forms of Apostle and Martyr, Bishop and King, while the sweet sounds of the Vesper chant floated around us, we seemed to be gazing on some heavenly vision.

The principal inn at Toledo having a repu-

tation for dirt, we lodged at the house of Donna Ramona, a grocer's wife, who occasionally receives strangers, that are recommended to her. She was most kind and attentive, doing her utmost to make us comfortable in her clean and nicely-furnished house. Her cooking, however, did not suit us at all. She gave us so much saffron and other national condiments, abominable to an English taste, that we really had great difficulty in eating what otherwise would have been unexceptionable. Beside this, which affected the whole party, she took an unfortunate fancy to my night-dress, and with utter disregard for my feelings and prejudices, converted the skirt into a duster, and to judge by its subsequent appearance, applied it to articles that had not been dusted for a long time. This I did not consider a meritorious action, nor from my ignorance of Spanish had I the satisfaction of remonstrating with her afterwards, and so relieving my wounded feelings. Altogether, we did not find a private house answer, and decided for the future never to have recourse to one, except in case of absolute necessity, which curiously enough, as it eventually turned out, was perpetually recurring. But at that time we were mere novices in the

art of making the best of things, and had we chanced to take up our abode under Donna Ramona's roof a week or two later, we should no doubt have felt perfectly content with all we found there.

CHAPTER XVI.

AT Toledo we were to commence our riding-tour, as the wild regions of Estremadura, into which we were going to penetrate, are inaccessible except to the horseman and muleteer. Here and there, it is true, the province is intersected by the great roads along which the *correo*, or mail, and the diligence run ; but our object was to avoid these routes as much as possible, which exhibit, all the world over, very much the same characteristics ; and to traverse those vast solitudes and far-reaching wastes, which give so peculiar a charm to Spanish tours. For this purpose Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes had bought horses at Madrid, while I preferred taking my chance, and trusting to what could be hired on the road. Donna Ramona's goodman, a modest being, whose position lay somewhat in the background of the family picture, recommended one of his neigh-

bours, Marcos Rabosos, as muleteer to our party; and he, for the sum of six *pesetas*, about five shillings in English money, a day per beast, agreed to provide one horse, three mules, and six donkeys, to carry myself, Swainson, Elfick, and Purkiss, together with all and sundry our goods, chattels, and appurtenances, from Toledo to Talavera, a journey of two days, back-money, and all their provender on the road, included. As, however, Marcos could not supply all these quadrupeds from his own stable, he engaged Tomas —, a fellow-townsmen with an unpronounceable name, to provide the remaining beasts, and to act generally as second in command during the expedition. We were to start on Monday morning, Oct. 24.

Monday came, bringing with it a cold wind, and bright sunshine, which made us anxious to be off. But this was no easy matter. To pack six donkeys in a narrow Toledan alley, encumbered with packages of all sorts and sizes, was by no means a simple undertaking. Everybody was coming into collision. The horses would not stand still, and the mules whiled away the time in biting and kicking each other. Packing ropes were either too long or too short, or broke just where they should have been strong-

est. The heaviest articles fell to the lot of the weakest donkeys, and the burden was by no means suited to the back that bore it. The confusion was truly Crimean, and everything went wrong, to the great amusement of Donna Ramona's neighbours. At length, after much expenditure of breath in hasty exclamations, and entire loss of patience both in man and beast, the word was given to start. Of course, every donkey set off at once, jamming his load into his neighbour's ribs, and the narrow street was in a moment choked up with a struggling mass, that could neither advance nor recede. Then one of the mules happening to stand in a more open space, would do nothing but turn round in a way it made one quite giddy to look at; while one of the horses would persist, in spite of whip and spur, in going backwards, and very nearly carried himself and his master in that direction down a flight of cellar steps. In fact there was such an utter absence of discipline and organization, as argued ominously against the prosperity of our expedition. At last, the donkey which carried the panniers containing the stores, by a vigorous effort disengaged himself from the throng, and, with a bang against the corner house, violent enough to

place the precious contents in extreme danger, gallantly led the way through the streets.

After clearing the outskirts of the town, and producing a sensation of rare occurrence amid the stagnation of Toledan life, we soon entered upon scenery thoroughly characteristic of the Peninsula. Our road lay sometimes along the bed of dried-up torrents, which a day's rain would render impassable ; but more generally through sandy wastes where hedge and tree are unknown, and in that free and open landscape, we felt we had indeed fairly entered upon those scenes, which, however devoid of natural beauty, have long been placed among the remarkable regions of the earth by the genius of Cervantes.

It was in this mood we journeyed on for leagues over a vast undulating plain, cultivated only in patches, and stretching on all sides to the horizon, with here and there a village chequering the waste. Every sight was a novelty that day, and the commonest farming operation reminded us we were really in the most old-world country in Europe, where many things are done to the present hour exactly as of yore in the days of the Patriarchs and Prophets. Once we came upon a party of peasants ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, calling to mind

Elisha's employment, when summoned to follow Elijah.

A keen north wind was blowing in our faces, and when we stopped to lunch at a Posada close to the bridge that crosses the Guadarrama, a confluent of the Tagus, we were glad enough to shelter ourselves within the broad porch, where sunshine and food cheered us for a fresh start. At these mid-day halts, which became our rule, whenever it was practicable, we always fed the horses; while the poor mules and donkeys had no refreshment whatever, and were condemned to a lengthened fast, often of twelve hours, being muzzled during the halt to prevent their eating each other's tails, as mules are very apt to do. The usual provender is barley and chopped straw, a very powerful, but heating diet, which renders horses especially liable to sudden attacks of inflammation.

In spite of the undeniable monotony of our route, we still found it most interesting, completely realizing as it did all our previous conceptions of a Spanish landscape. Our late start caused us to be benighted, and for about three hours we rode on in darkness over a wild heath, where the path was rough and uncertain, and where in by-gone times, robberies were frequent.

Such things, however, are seldom heard of nowadays, thanks to the exertions of the Guardia Civil, and the only anxiety we felt was to reach St. Olalla, where we proposed sleeping, and as the night was pitch-dark, with nothing to diversify our monotonous journeying but stumbles and collisions, we were not sorry to find ourselves at last in the court-yard of a Posada.

As we are now for several weeks to have so much to do with Inns, it will be well to mention, that in Spain they are of three classes. The Fonda, which is seldom found except in the largest and most-frequented cities, corresponds to the Hotel of other parts of Europe. The Posada, which is universal in town and country, stands upon a level with a way-side inn, or bettermost public-house, while the Venta is about as good or bad, as the English beer-shop, being frequented by only the very lowest classes. In towns you may occasionally meet with decent accommodation at a *Casa de pupillos*, a sort of boarding-house.

Of all these, we had most to do with the Posada, and it is only fair to state, that we generally found them far more comfortable than we had expected. The Posada professes to supply nothing but lodging, the beds being

almost invariably clean and comfortable, with now and then a separate sitting-room, containing a table, some chairs, and adorned with a few religious prints. The only comestible you can reckon upon is bread; while eggs, wine of the neighbourhood, and milk of ewe or goat, generally belong to the category of luxuries, and cannot be had for love or money in many places.

The Posada at St. Olalla, like most others we met with, is entered through a large barn-like room, open to the roof, and traversed by all the winds of heaven. On one side, the fire-place withdrawn into a recess formed a most picturesque chimney-corner, welcoming us with a cheerful blaze that lighted up the whole apartment, while around sat a group of muleteers singing to the guitar. *Vis-a-vis* was a long room containing no fire-place, and only one small window unglazed, and this, with two side-chambers, supplied us accommodation for the night. Opposite the entrance, which is a regular gateway, and has almost a fortified character, is the stable, a most important feature in all Spanish inns.

A brazier, brimful of aromatic embers, soon filled our sitting-room, which at first looked

dismal and chilly, with warmth, and sweet odours; and though there was nothing but eggs to be had in the house, yet these, with slices of broiled ham, made us an excellent supper. At least we thought so at the moment; but our ideas on the commissariat developed so largely afterwards, when from time to time we were regaled with kid, hare, partridges, fresh pork, and other delicacies, that we came to regard our dinner at St. Olalla as the rude essay of novices in the art of providing for themselves.

I relate all these things, which in themselves are very trivial, not only because they were to us matters of daily concern, but as being so many illustrations of travel in this singular land. Before quitting the culinary department I must add, that we are looking forward with peculiar interest to the first of November, because on that day, pork-killing becomes legal, and in many districts we shall have to depend entirely upon the flesh of the unclean beast for animal food. Between Easter and All Saints' no pig in Spain dies according to law, and as mutton and beef are rarities, even in towns of considerable size (such as Placentia for instance, where with a population of 12,000, only one

ox is killed during the whole twelve months), the late autumn, when excellent pork is plentiful, is one of the best seasons for travelling in Spain for those who are not strong enough to dispense with the usual diet of Englishmen.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE had hardly started next morning, (Tuesday, October 25,) before it began to rain, and a walk of about four miles an hour being our usual pace, it was not quite enjoying "the sunny south" to go on toiling hour after hour, cloaked and umbrella-ed, along a muddy road, with nothing to look at but an endless sweep of saturated cornfields. We toiled on, however, through the successive showers, hoping for great things at Talavera; and a name so familiar to English ears seemed to promise more than a common welcome. We found (alas! for the vanity of human wishes) a very different reception. The principal Posada was filled with a troupe of French circus-people on their way to Lisbon, and it was only after we had wandered more than once up and down the town, and even then chiefly by the aid of one of the equestrians, a

most good-natured lad, that we found any place to put our heads in. Our new-made acquaintance rendered us another material service, by initiating Purkiss into the mysteries of Talavera shopping, the result of which appeared in due time under the shape of a substantial supper.

The only objects of interest we saw at Talavera were some very fine Roman remains, and several specimens of the porcelain which takes its name from the town, most of these being let in, like panels, into the fronts of houses and churches. The Tagus too is a feature, but in other respects it is one of the most deplorable-looking towns we saw anywhere in Spain; so that we were not at all sorry next morning to take our departure, setting off for Oropesas, in the pleasant sunshine, the mere change of weather making to-day's ride delightful, by contrast with yesterday's downpour.

Our road lay still through the same great plain; but we had now on our left, wide-spreading prospects, and purple distances to give it interest, while to the right, dense masses of fog and cloud reminded us of the recent rain. Presently up sprang a fresh breeze from the west, the clouds and fog gradually lifted, revealing, to our surprise and delight, the towering form of

the Sierra de Gredosa, a range of mountains more than 10,000 ft. high, powdered half-way down by newly-fallen snow. These mountains continued in sight the whole day, adding an unexpected charm to the broad valley of the Tagus, as we were not at all aware till then, that so elevated a chain exists in this part of Spain.

While we were at Madrid, Sir Andrew Buchanan had kindly procured for Lord Portarlington an order from the Home Minister addressed to the Guardia Civil, a body of police stationed along all the great roads, and as good of their kind, as the far-famed Irish constabulary. This was a great advantage, enabling us in certain localities to have an escort, if required. One of their stations lies between Talavera and Oropesas, and the sergeant in charge informed us, that orders had been sent down the line directing them to render us every assistance.

We saw men belonging to this force in different parts of the country, and always found them particularly civil and intelligent. From everything we heard and observed, no greater benefit has been conferred on Spain during the present century, than the formation by Narvaez of this police, which has annihilated the organized

brigandage, which twenty years ago was an all-pervading nuisance. At that moment, the sergeant and his party were in quest of an enterprising individual, who, according to O'Connell's phrase, "had registered a vow" (though, I fear, not exactly in the same registry as the Irish demagogue used to have recourse to), that he would rob the first mail, or diligence that came in his way. Whether he succeeded in fulfilling his vow unscathed, or whether he fell into the hands of the police, we never heard.

As we began to approach the confines of Estremadura, our route, which had hitherto lain through the province of Toledo, now skirted forests of ilex, and other kinds of ever-green oak, with which extensive districts in this neighbourhood are covered. There we made our first acquaintance with the Estreme-nian pigs, a race of porkers held in high estimation all through the Peninsula, and equalling, both in symmetry and fatness, any I have ever seen in England. At this season they are driven daily into the forests from the surrounding villages, to feed themselves fat on the acorns of oak, ilex, and cork tree, and for the moment with their attendant swineherds they impart to those solitary glades an amount of

animation, never observed there during the rest of the year. These herds are excessively shy, disappearing instantly at the approach of a stranger. If, however, any one desires a closer inspection, he has only to beat the fruit-laden trees for a few minutes, and he will soon be surrounded by a swinish multitude attracted from all quarters by the welcome sound of crashing boughs, and the downfall of acorns, which they know will follow. I became quite an adept at the work, and the swineherds used to regard me with a friendly eye, though evidently wondering why I should give myself so much trouble for other people's pigs.

Every now and then we fell in with a party of muleteers, going in the same direction, and our combined forces presented quite an imposing appearance. Some of these parties, as I cannot help recollecting, showed an anxiety to keep company with us, such as we never observed on any other occasion. They had no doubt heard of the brigands' presence in that neighbourhood, and fancying probably that we carried fire-arms, which, however, was not the case, were not sorry to avail themselves of our escort; their own numbers, though considerable, affording no reliable protection against

the *mala gente*, a single brigand having been known to rob eighteen or twenty natives at once, without meeting with the slightest resistance.

At Oropesas, where we arrived some time before sunset, we found the most primitive posada imaginable. Not a single pane of glass in the whole establishment, the windows being mere latticed casements, that offered us the alternative of total darkness, or an incursion of keen wintry air, fresh from the snow-clad heights of the neighbouring mountains. The people of the house were most civil, doing their best to make us comfortable, and giving up their own beds to increase our accommodation. Everything was perfectly clean, and though, by way of precaution, I blew a cloud of flea-powder over my bed, I quite believe from the experiences of the rest, it was a needless ceremony. Before night-fall we visited the castle, a very fine medieval building, though of no great extent. It is in tolerable condition, and the battlements command an unbroken view over plain and mountain, which, as we saw them suffused with the glories of sunset, formed a panorama of rare beauty.

Purkiss to-day served us a feast of pork and

hashed hare, so that with our store of wine we fared sumptuously, and as we now began to understand better what we were about, and to discover more resources both in ourselves and in the country, we went to bed in excellent spirits, hoping to reach Cuacos to-morrow.

Just as I was turning in, having by a lucky accident secured the door, I heard a loud hammering at its massive panels, and on opening it found myself face to face with the landlord, who was intent upon making his way to his accustomed night-quarters, at that time in my occupation, while his daughter, behind him, was doing all she could to frustrate his intentions. As he was a puny little body, and she a sturdy dame with a stalwart arm and determined will, the struggle soon terminated, and she carried him off with many words, which having a most vituperative sound, were interpreted to us afterwards as expressing a decided resolution to break the head of her "respected Parient." It turned out that the little man had been taking so much wine as to render him utterly oblivious of his duties as a landlord. To such a pitch of independence had his potations elevated him, that he actually conceived he had a prior claim to his own proper bed! and it was under the influ-

ence of this delusion that he began to batter the door leading thither. Poor man! he looked next morning smaller than ever, and it was in a tone of annihilating sarcasm that his daughter remarked to us, as he sat cowering in the chimney corner, "He was somebody yesterday, to-day he is nobody!"

We always make a bargain beforehand at every inn we enter, finding it absolutely necessary to take this precaution. Until we adopted this plan, the most absurd demands were made for the most ordinary accommodation, and we observed it to be an invariable rule, that the less we had, the higher the charge. At St. Olalla, for instance, where we had nothing but bread, eggs, and milk, with lodging for ourselves and the servants, and provender for three horses (the muleteers paying for the rest of the beasts), the landlord had the effrontery to ask ten dollars, about £2 5s., which Lord Portarlington refused to pay, giving them seven, and even that was far too much.

Bargaining beforehand economizes time, temper, and money, and enables the traveller to part from his host in a friendly mood. Indeed, since we adopted this plan, nothing can be more affec-

tionate than our adieux, and after having paid about half the sums previously demanded, we set out on our day's march amid the tenderest demonstrations of respect and affection from host, hostess, and the whole family circle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT is quite surprising what extreme difficulty we find in getting accurate information respecting distances, roads, inns, and other matters affecting the convenience of travellers. Purkiss speaks Spanish fluently, and from his long residence in the country is intimately acquainted with the ways of the people; yet with all these advantages, he is seldom successful in obtaining reliable information, even in the immediate neighbourhood of a locality for which we happen to be making. When we stood on the battlements of the Duque de Frias' fine castle at Oropesas, gazing at the Vera below us, as it glowed in the sunset, the old man, who accompanied us, pointed out the direction of Yuste, and spoke of the distance as a moderate day's journey. We found it, however, a very different affair. Ford directs those riding from Madrid to Yuste, to turn off at Navalморal to

the right, to Zazahuete six leagues ; thence to El Barco del Rio Xerte, one league ; then three leagues and a half through aromatic wastes to Cuacos, and the Convent.

We took a somewhat different route. Descending from Oropesas soon after 8 A.M. on the 27th October, we regained the Camino Real, which we had followed the two previous days, and at the first post-house struck off to the right along a bye-road running in a northerly direction through open cornfields, which ere long we gladly exchanged for a picturesque tract of woodland, where groups of ilex and cork-tree interspersed with thicket, and brake of low shrub and wild vine, assured us we had now escaped from the monotony of the high-road, and were beginning to penetrate those remoter depths of Spanish scenery, to which we had hitherto been strangers. Every now and then we crossed the bed of some dried-up winter-brook. Better riding-ground we could not have than the firm sand, on which the hoof of horse and mule fell noiselessly, as vista, and glade opened, luring us onward through a succession of forest landscapes, that suggested any amount of romantic adventure, even in this work-a-day nineteenth century.

Our destination was San Benito, where we hoped to get further information, as well as something to eat, that ever-present necessity which "sits behind the rider" in Spain, wherever he goes. The distance was, of course, much greater than we had been led to expect, such being almost always the case in this "land of the unforeseen;" and a traveller at all inclined to practical philosophy will soon make a resolution never to think of his arrival at any place, until he is actually there. This decision will save an infinity of inquiries, loss of time and patience, to say nothing of those hopes deferred, which make the heart sick.

At length we reached San Benito, a farm in the very depths of the forest, belonging to the Marques de Mirabel, a nobleman of historical name, who owns quite a large district in the neighbourhood. It consists of two houses, one very smart with paint and glass windows (features in Spanish domestic architecture we have learnt to look upon with much respect, as the *ne plus ultra* of civilization and comfort), where the proprietor rusticates occasionally for shooting; while the other, a rambling farm-house, is occupied by the steward and his family. A small church completes the group of buildings. It is

a singular-looking spot, reminding one, in many respects, of the description of some great Australian sheep-farm, minus the smart house and the church.

Here we alighted, fully intending after a brief halt to proceed on our journey, in the hope of reaching Cuacos the same evening. The steward was from home, and his representatives showed such extreme caution, and reserve in doing the honours, that in England they would be set down as decidedly uncivil, and as they would not ask us to walk in, we were obliged to dispense with the ceremony, and entered the farm-house uninvited.

We now discovered, that Cuacos was still distant a long day's ride of very bad road, with a considerable river to cross, nor was there any posada midway where we might find accommodation for the night, nor any house for miles round. So we found ourselves obliged to request lodging, with something of the peremptoriness of a highwayman asking for a traveller's money, though prepared of course to pay for all we received. The mistress being a dutiful wife, would promise us nothing, till her goodman came home; so we made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances permitted, fully

resolved to abide by his permission, if granted, but to ignore a refusal altogether, as a breach of the law of nations. This determination answered perfectly, and when he came home to supper, our occupation of his house, and premises was a *fait accompli* of too settled a character to be overthrown.

On awaking next morning, in hope of an early start, we found it had been raining most of the night, with every prospect of continuance; and the brook which yesterday babbled by, a tiny rill, had now overflowed its banks, suggesting the obvious reflection, that many a watercourse in the forest, which on our way to San Benito might have been crossed dryshod, must now be swollen to the dimensions of an unfordable torrent.

It was the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, and the Cura, who served the church, had come a considerable distance through the rain, to celebrate Mass at 7 A.M. An Englishman's traditionary idea of a Spanish priest is compounded of Rosalind's lack-Latin ecclesiastic, "with whom time ambles," and Jacques' country justice "of fair round belly with good capon lined;" and when this clergyman at San Benito politely called on us, I dare say, we uncon-

sciously expected to see in him the realization of our national idea.

Poor man! the reality proved to be much more after the fashion of Romeo's starveling apothecary, and it quite grieved us to see one of his order bearing about him such unmistakable signs of poverty. The pittance he receives for serving the church at San Benito is paid by the Marques de Mirabel, and if good wishes on our part could have any potency, his stipend would soon be augmented.

The Cura, and I, tried to converse together in Latin, but the English accent and pronunciation in speaking that language, are unfortunately so very different from those of every other nation, that we could hardly understand each other, and soon gave up the attempt. The hospitality of the steward and his family remained *in statu quo*. Cold as ice yesterday, to-day it was still unthawed, and its effect was very visible in the scantiness of our accommodations. Spanish households of every class, that came under our observation, abound with stores of linen. But at San Benito even towels were unattainable luxuries, and we had in consequence to make use of our own wearing-linen instead. I felt a strong inclination to

apply one of my sheets to that purpose, but the state of the weather suggested the extreme probability of our staying there another night, and the comfort of so ample a towel would have been dearly purchased by the discomfort of a damp bed.

It is astonishing, however, how well we managed to get on, despite our destitution of appliances, which at home are as necessary as daily food; and every day, by retrenching the range of comforts hitherto indispensable, taught us more and more the truth of the line, "Man wants but little here below." Were any of the "Gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease," to see my linen as it comes back from the wash, yellow and full of wrinkles as the visage of some old crone, he would be filled with horror. No one ever beheld such "getting-up," and I am beginning to regard such shirts, as one daily wears at home, with a feeling of positive reverence, as things pertaining to a higher state of existence.

It was a great resource to us that wet day, which ended, as it began, with rain, to write letters, and to bring up our journals to the current era, though not under the most favourable circumstances for refinement of composi-

tion; and if this record prove tedious, I must console myself with the recollection of the service it rendered me at San Benito, in the employment of hours, which otherwise would have hung heavily.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEXT morning, October 29th, Fortune smiled on us, and the sun came forth at intervals through the mist with every indication of better weather. Glad indeed were we all to be off, as soon as we had made a scanty breakfast, and settled accounts with our host, the fresh air of "incense-breathing morn" making mere motion a pleasure, while the rain had left upon every leaf and blade of grass a verdure, that is rarely seen in a Spanish landscape.

The forest, through which our road still lay, displayed timber of larger growth, and greater variety, than any we had yet met with. Many of the cork-trees had been recently stripped, exhibiting the inner bark, which when first laid bare is a vivid crimson, bright as fresh paint, as if Nature had lately been trying her hand at artificial decoration, in emulation of the painter's skill. The wild vine with

graceful festoons depending from the topmost branches of some ancient oak, here put forth its most brilliant hues, lighting up the whole scene, and outvying even the ruby of the Virginian creeper. There were pigs too in the forest eating the acorns, which yesterday's rain had brought down in profusion from ilex and cork tree, while the prettiest jays I ever saw, neat as Quakeresses, with black caps, and lavender bodies, flitted from bough to bough.

As we advanced, we had to ford several brooks, which yesterday must have been altogether impassable, and it was quite a picture to look back at the long train of mules and horses filing through the water. I never was in any spot, which so thoroughly realized the poetry of a forest, with its variety of timber, fern, heath, and low shrubs, its brooks and long-drawn glades leading we knew not whither. A dreamy stillness reigned around, carrying the mind far back into the past, until we were quite prepared to meet Jacques or Touchstone, or even Robin Hood and his men, so vividly were the days of old spent "under the greenwood tree" recalled to the imagination by surrounding objects. Nature had indeed amply done her part in preparing the stage;

but no actors in keeping with its scenes came forth to people it, or to satisfy our romantic aspirations by reproducing the past. A few muleteers, and swine-herds were the only figures, that gave animation to the landscape, and they neither moralized, jested, nor demanded our money.

One of them was excessively surprised to meet so large a calvacade in that lonely spot, without a guide, the lad who accompanied us from San Benito to show us the way, having by this time turned homewards.

We were making for the Tiedar, a tributary of the Tagus, and in due time reached its banks. It was flowing with a broad, rapid stream about forty yards wide, a considerable belt of sand on its left bank indicating, that occasionally it expands into three times that volume.

Here we found a ferry-boat of most primitive construction, large enough to carry our whole party, beasts and all, in two trips, and while the dilatory boatmen were making up their minds to the exertion of paddling us over, we had time for a hasty lunch. Hereabout the province of Toledo terminates, and the wild regions of Estremadura, to which we were look-

ing forward with so much hope and interest, commence.

It amused us greatly to see an old mastiff, belonging to the steward at San Benito, in anxious haste to cross by the first boat. He had accompanied us thus far, as we fondly imagined, in polite acknowledgment of various little civilities rendered him by the members of our party, while we stayed under his master's roof. Now, however, we discovered he had ulterior views in joining himself to our company. In fact, he had a very hard life at San Benito, in the shape of short-commons coupled with a superabundance of kicks and blows. Our arrival, and all the choice morsels of Bayonne ham, and chicken bones, that descended upon him in consequence, had evidently inspired the poor drudge with ideas of a pleasanter world than he had ever moved in, and he was now taking advantage of our departure to go and seek his fortune. We really could not find heart to send him back, and when once he had landed on the right bank of the Tiedar, we felt the Rubicon of his career was crossed, and adopted him into all the privileges of our community, the two muleteers having already expressed serious intentions of offering him a

home with them at Toledo, when our wanderings are over. But alas! that I should have to finish the story. Next morning the muleteers having "slept on it," discovered they were undertaking too heavy a responsibility; the poor old dog was sent back by some chance opportunity to his rightful master at San Benito; and all his bright visions of plenty, and good treatment, vanished into thin air

The passage of the river having been safely accomplished, we now entered upon a very different country. Extensive tracts of low oak-scrub, where scattered groups of grey old boulders overtopping the underwood, enclosed here and there, amid spaces of greensward, cosy little nooks of extreme beauty, which fairies would delight in, had modern civilization left us any representatives of "the Fair Family." Now-a-days it would be considered the very spot for a pic-nic. The road was perpetually traversed by cross-paths, making it most intricate, and so detestably bad, that none but Spanish horses could have scrambled over such a succession of roots, rocks, and ruts. Soon after crossing the ferry we met a poor man, whose pony, laden with tiles, had broken its thigh from a fall, and though we would gladly have

helped him in his trouble, nothing could be done to relieve his poor beast. Sometimes we had a rapid descent of perhaps half a mile over pavement of almost Cyclopean character, inlaid with stones of such size and roughness, that even a good walker would find it difficult to pick his way in safety. By-and-by we entered upon a miry lane, where the mud was so deep and tenacious, that even the horses could hardly get on, while the poor donkeys seemed on the point of sticking fast at every step. In fact, the roads hereabout are so very bad, that at Madrid we had been expressly cautioned not to attempt them on horseback, a warning we never remembered, until it was too late.

The scenery, however, was so exquisitely beautiful, and so full of novelty, that we thought of little else, and we were now approaching the chain of mountains under which Yuste stands. An artist would have filled whole portfolios with the scenes revealed at every turn. One spot in particular seemed to challenge a painter's best powers.

A bridge of rough mountain stone, mossy and grey, with an arch of high pitch, spanned a stream, which combined the rush and foam of a torrent, with the pellucid brightness of

some lowland brook, meandering through fair meadows. Above, its course divided a range of fern-clad mountains, which descended in gentle slopes of brown to its very brink, while below it found a quiet bed among patches of newly-sown wheat, and strips of pasture, fringed with stately poplars in all the glory of their autumn tints, a picturesque old mill, that was in itself a study, throwing out the brighter portions of the picture by the modest tone of its colouring. Far as we had still to travel that day, we could not but pause a moment here.

We passed through several villages, and the natives stared as if they had never seen such an array of strangers, wondering no doubt what could be our inducement to penetrate these wild and unfrequented regions.

At nightfall I had an opportunity of testing the steadiness and good temper of the horse Lord Portarlington purchased at Madrid, which I rode to-day. We had just descended the worst piece of paved road we had yet met with, and seeing through the twilight, that a little further on a torrent of some depth, flanked by a precipice, crossed the road with no bridge but a few planks, I thought it best to dismount, not knowing how my horse would behave. I

had hardly got my right foot to the ground, when from resting on a loose stone it gave way, and in a moment I found myself thrown on my back in front of the horse, with my left foot wedged tight in its stirrup, an article of native workmanship so narrow, and cramped as to be quite dangerous. To make matters worse, I was encumbered with a thick cloak, a slight shower having recently fallen. The bridge was not above twenty or thirty yards ahead, and close behind, clattering over the stones, came the rest of the party. Most horses under such circumstances would have dashed onward in fear, and dismay, dragging me along to almost certain death; but by God's mercy mine stood perfectly still, and allowed me to drag myself upright by main force, pulling for dear life by the stirrup-leather. Never did horse give better proof of steadiness, and good-temper, and, as may well be imagined, I loved him ever after, as one who had been a true friend in a moment of extreme peril.

CHAPTER XX.

JUST about sunset we passed through Xarandilla, where Charles V. spent three months while Yuste was being prepared for his reception. Stirling ("Cloister Life," pp. 28, 29) says of it, "Xarandilla was, and still is, the most considerable village in the Vera of Placentia. Walled to the north with lofty Sierras, and watered with abundant streams, its mild climate, rich soil, and perpetual verdure, led some patriotic scholars of Estremadura to identify this beautiful valley with the Elysium of Homer, 'The green land without snow, or winter, or showers.'

"The fair valley was unquestionably famous throughout Spain for its wine, oil, chestnuts and citrons, for its magnificent timber, for the deer, bears, wolves, and all other animals of the chase, which abounded in its woods, and for the delicate trout which peopled its mountain waters.

“The village of Xarandilla is seated on the side of the Sierra of Xaranda, and near the confluence of two mountain torrents, which fall from the steep Penanegra. The mansion of the Oropesas, built in the feudal style, with corner towers, has long been in ruins; and of its imperial inmate the village has preserved no other memorial than a fountain, which is still called ‘The Fountain of the Emperor,’ in the garden of a deserted monastery, once belonging to the order of St. Augustine.”

Night overtook us soon after passing Xarandilla, and the only light we had to guide us on this worst of all possible roads, (as in our inexperience we then deemed it,) was the faint beam, that fell from the slender crescent of the young moon as she declined towards the west.

At last we saw the lights of a village, and made sure it was Cuacos. But when, at the peril of our necks, we had scrambled along a series of those stony gutters, which in this neighbourhood have done duty for streets some three centuries or more, with a stream strong and rapid as a small mill-race careering down the centre, and then emerged into the village square, we found to our infinite disappointment,

that Cuacos was still a good league off, which in Spain is a most elastic figure of speech, representing any distance from four to seven miles, especially in mountain districts, where large ideas are in vogue.

So on we toiled, rather out of humour, and when at last, after another hour and a half's travel, we reached our destination, men and beasts had done a good day's work of at least eleven hours.

We found the posada so very wretched, that we betook ourselves forthwith to that ever-open refuge for the destitute traveller in all Roman Catholic countries I have visited—the house of the *Cura*.

That gentleman, Don Louis Setiz, gave us a most cordial welcome, utter strangers though we were, without even an introduction except our necessities. Not only did he place his house, with all it contained, at our disposal, in the spirit of true Spanish courtesy, but took care moreover to prove his words were no mere Chinese compliment, professing everything, but meaning nothing.

We must have caused him considerable inconvenience, but there was no indication of its existence to be traced in the perfect kindness

of his manner the whole time we remained under his roof.

I wonder what any of us English clergymen would say, were three gentlemen from Spain to throw themselves on our hospitality some Saturday night between eight and nine, taking possession of the best portion of the Parsonage, and turning the Incumbent himself (if unmarried) out of his own particular bedroom? I fear they would hardly meet with the welcome we received at Cuacos!

Purkiss set up his cuisine at the posada, supplying our meals from thence, and there he, Swainson, and Elfick, managed to get some sort of beds, after having slept in their clothes the three previous nights. Unhappily, however, the loft in which they lay was so abundantly stored with newly-gathered pods of red pepper, that their eyes streamed like fountains all night long, and they had, poor fellows! a most miserable time of it.

Ford, in his "Gatherings," p. 169, inveighs against English servants as worse than useless in Spain. "They are nowhere greater incumbrances than in this hungry, thirsty, treeless, beerless, beefless land; they give more trouble, require more food and attention, and are

ten times more discontented, than their masters."

Our experience was altogether different; nothing could exceed the good-humour, patience and cheerfulness, with which each of them underwent every sort of discomfort, privation, and fatigue, from the beginning to the very end of our long journey, and this in a man of Purkiss's age, between fifty and sixty, was especially praiseworthy.

CHAPTER XXI.

IT was on a lovely morning that we visited Yuste, under the guidance of the good Cura. The day and season were in perfect harmony with the object of our pilgrimage, where the greatest monarch of his age had sought a brief breathing-space between the world and the grave. The late autumn, with its gentle sunshine and perfect stillness, realized to us with peculiar force the motives that induced Charles to retire to such a spot, contrasting so strongly by its seclusion and repose with the turmoil and disquietude of his previous career.

Yuste stands a full mile above Cuacos, just where the steeper slopes of the mountain, that shelters it from the northern blast, subside towards the plain. Eastward a tract of upland cuts off all prospect in that direction, only to enhance the delight with which the eye turns

to the south-western expanse, where copse-wood, and vineyard, green bank and rocky knoll, mountain-glen and shining river, terminate in the broad plain of the Tagus, with its glittering villages, and dark groves of ilex. In the silvery thread of water intersecting the landscape we recognize the river Tiedar, crossed by us yesterday, and on the extreme horizon we trace the purple mountain-range, through which we hope to make our way to Seville.

Lord Portarlington and I were reminded of the hills behind Powerscourt, both in their form and colour, by the range that overhangs the convent, clothed with its autumnal drapery of heather, and fern, and looking to English eyes so natural and home-like.

It was delicious to sit in Charles's favourite balcony enjoying the pleasant sunshine, as he had often done, and gazing on the same landscape that once was the companion of his solitude. The very air seems redolent of peace and tranquillity; for without bearing any impress of that loneliness and desolation characteristic of so many a scene in Spain, Yuste is pervaded with a soothing influence sequestering the mind from worldly associations, and drawing it into communion with better things. I

never saw any spot commanding so extensive a prospect, fraught with such an atmosphere of repose, as it lay basking in the October sunshine. You see, it is true, indications of man's presence in vineyard and cornfield, but he occupies a retiring position, in modest subordination to Nature, as one owning her supremacy over that fair region, and unwilling to obtrude even his humble dwelling on the view; not a single cottage being discernible as the eye glances over the broad tank, where Charles used to fish, downward into the bosom of the Vera.

We found the convent a complete ruin, its central court filled with a chaos of *débris*, out of which fig-tree, myrtle, and box, unpruned and wild, struggle forth into open day. The Church has sustained little substantial injury, the massive solidity of its masonry having happily defeated every attempt the French made to demolish it, and a few repairs now being carried on, will soon render it as sound as ever. It is a remarkably fine specimen of the Florid Gothic so often seen in Spain, with a noble chancel-arch, and an altar of high elevation.

A considerable portion of the west end is



CHARLES VTH'S BALCONY. YUSTE.

occupied by a stone gallery, with a low pierced screen in front, a feature not uncommon in Spanish churches.

Against the south wall of the Church stand the apartments built for Charles's reception, consisting of only two stories, with four rooms in each, his bed-chamber having a window opening directly into the chancel, which enabled him to witness the celebration of mass, when too unwell to leave his bed. It was here Charles died, September 21st, 1558, having felt the first approach of death on the 31st August, as he sat sunning himself in his favourite western balcony.

We saw the coffin, a rude chest of chestnut-wood, in which his remains reposed for sixteen years, before their ultimate removal to the Escorial.

Nothing can be simpler or more unpretending than the Imperial apartments, which remain substantially very much as they were at Charles's death, and we thought ourselves fortunate in the moment of our visit. For the present proprietor is going to restore the building, in consequence, it is said, of the interest excited in the spot by recent writers, more especially Stirling in his "*Cloister Life of*

Charles V.," the scaffolding and building materials being all prepared when we were there.

The intention is certainly most praiseworthy, but it is to be hoped, nothing will be attempted beyond necessary repairs.

We duly visited all Charles's haunts, and were especially struck with the situation of his summer balcony, with its umbrageous belt of trees, and cool northern aspect. We then descended the sloping causeway constructed to save him the fatigue of going up and down stairs, an exertion which his frequent attacks of gout must have rendered very trying.

Of course we did not fail to go to the great walnut-tree, under which the Emperor used to sit, and which even in his day was famous for its size and patriarchal age. The steward gathered for us some of its fruit, and we carried them away as a *souvenir* of one of the most interesting places I ever had the happiness to visit. It was a great advantage to have the Cura's company, introducing us as it did to every civility and attention on the part of the good-natured steward, who did the honours in a very pleasing manner, and, what is even more worthy of record, declined accepting any pecu-

niary acknowledgment of his services, though evidently gratified by the offer.

In going to Yuste we had a good deal of fragmentary conversation with the Cura, partly in Latin, and partly in the few scraps of Spanish we had managed to pick up, eked out by an occasional bit of pantomime, when all other expedients failed to convey our meaning. He was very much surprised at an English Prayer-book I showed him, having hitherto never heard that the Church of England possesses a regular Liturgy, with various services and forms of devotion, drawn from "the pure well" of Catholic Antiquity, and that she does not leave her people at the mercy of extemporized effusions, as is the case with so many of the sects into which Protestantism is divided.

The walk from Yuste to Cuacos is so very pretty that, as we emerged from the hollow in which the convent nestles, I lingered behind my companions to enjoy for a longer space the eastward view, on which, as yet, I had hardly looked. Here and there stand small homesteads scattered over the mountain-side, each under a group of chestnuts, while every rocky ledge, and natural terrace, has its narrow strip of green corn or ruddy vineyard sloping to the

south. The wind came gently soughing up the valley, mingled with the sounds of distant waters, that added to the quiet sadness of the scene, which I gazed upon with the conviction I should never see it again.

On returning to the Cura's house, we found the servants had been holding quite a reception during our absence, the villagers feeling a very natural curiosity to see, and hear something more of the strangers whose arrival had caused quite a sensation in that secluded community. The servants very good-naturedly showed everything that could interest them, more especially the India-rubber sponging-baths, which they inflated in their sight to their great wonderment and delight.

In Charles's day the people of Cuacos did not bear the best character, and it is quite amusing to find that the greatest monarch of the age, whose word was law to so many millions, was utterly unable to keep them, his nearest neighbours, in anything like order. They seem actually to have given him far more trouble and worry than all the rest of his dominions. They poached his trout, drove away his small dairy of two cows, and pelted his son Don John of Austria, the future hero of Lepanto, because,

like a boy of enterprise, he made inroads upon their cherry-trees. Charles seems at last to have been fairly at his wits' end, and held solemn consultations with the gentlemen of his suite, as to the best method of bringing them to a sense of their duty.

There is a vague tradition, that the name of the place, Cuacos, was first suggested by some enormity of theirs, which the Emperor happened to witness. Some assert that they had just broken Don John's head, when his Imperial father came up, very wroth no doubt at such an outrage, and while on the point of venting his indignation, a duck chancing to quack, a sudden inspiration seized him at the sound, and he declared such people no longer deserved to be treated as men, being in fact no better than ducks, or such-like irrational creatures.

Stirling disbelieves the story for the best of all reasons—Cuacos was so called before Charles ever went to Yuste, though he allows it may have had its origin in some previous incident; it being quite certain that even in the present day, any allusion to the name Cuacos is highly offensive to the villagers, producing upon their minds very much the same sensation felt by certain good people in the county of Dorset

at the slightest reference to the history of the Shapwick Monster!

However, we had every reason to speak favourably of the whole population, with the excellent Cura at their head, for they showed us every civility, and were evidently much pleased and not a little flattered by our visit.

CHAPTER XXII.

IT was with much regret that we said good-bye to our worthy host the Cura of Cuacos, having first induced him to accept some return for the trouble and expense our visit had occasioned in his quiet household. This he received with unembarrassed simplicity of manner, as if, like a man of sense, he felt it to be no discredit to possess such slender means, as would make the exercise of unrequited hospitality impossible.

Placentia was our next destination, a distance of about thirty miles, and as the route is very intricate, abounding with what the Spaniards call "partridge-paths," we engaged a guide at Cuacos, who slung a couple of hams at his saddle-bow, intending therewith to do a little business on his own account, after piloting us through the wilds that intervene between his

native village and the principal town of the district.

Having, as we calculated, ridden more than a hundred miles since leaving Toledo, we had gained sufficient experience to understand the necessities and requirements of our journey, and began to look forward hopefully to its successful accomplishment, now that we knew what man and beast could perform.

Our road to-day (October 31st) skirted the lower slopes of the Yuste chain, its terrace-like windings bringing us continually upon some display of autumnal beauty, that would enchant an English water-colourist. I never remember to have seen anywhere such a perfect blaze of colour, as met the eye along this road, from the ruby and lemon of the vine, to the soberer hues of the oak, while the distant mountains of Guadalupe toned down the picture with rich shades of indigo and purple. It was a most enjoyable ride, the day being everything we could desire, warm and sunshiny, yet fresh; and when our path left the cultivated dells and ascended the mountain-side along the banks of a lovely trout-stream, that would have converted even old Johnson himself into a fisherman, we once more caught sight of Yuste, refreshing our

impressions of yesterday; and stamping them deeper on the tablets of memory. We passed through masses of Spanish chestnut, green as "in the leafy month of June," contrasting most effectively with the brown fern out of which they grew.

It was indeed a feast of beauty, and one longed to summon to it, by some magic power, all who could appreciate such an entertainment.

Through oak woods and orchards we descended upon Pasaron, which Ford describes as "a picturesque old town of Prout-like houses, with toppling balconies, overhanging a brawling brook." Here we took a hasty luncheon, while the horses were feeding, and the good people having apparently no important business on hand at that particular moment, clustered like bees round the inn-door, headed by the Cura, a brisk little man, of decidedly controversial turn. He soon accosted me, and before we had exchanged half a dozen words, he plunged headlong into polemics, and tried to draw me after him; asserting that there was one faith and one Church, and that within the pale of the Romish Communion alone were

these essentials to be found. Had I accepted his challenge, we might have been at it till now, with perhaps more than the usual fruitlessness of controversy; so I contented myself with remarking that the Church of England holds no more and no less, than "the faith once delivered to the Saints" in Apostolic times. Though we parted very graciously, I fear the little man was disappointed at my non-combativeness, he being one of those pugnacious spirits to whom a passage of arms is a real enjoyment, more especially amid the stagnation of a secluded neighbourhood.

We now entered upon a new line of country, *dehesas* (sheep-walks) consisting of uncultivated wastes, with extensive tracts of oak-scrub watered here and there by shallow brooks, and this continued nearly the whole way to Placentia. In Estremadura vast districts have been in this condition, ever since the expulsion of the Moors, and what was once called in Arabic, as Ford states, "the land of corn," is now reduced in great measure to a mere barren desert, producing nothing but scanty pasturage for sheep, and those very few compared with the immense area over which they range. To English eyes,

however, such regions of solitude are as striking as happily they are novel, and we journeyed on through them with much enjoyment, arriving at Placentia, of which we had a lovely sunset view from the vine-clad height, Calzones, shortly after nightfall.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE had formed great hopes of this place, with its population of 6000, and exquisite position in the teeming valley of the Xerte. Our stores had fallen into reduced circumstances, and we now fondly flattered ourselves, that in so considerable a town, the centre of a very extensive district, there would be no difficulty in restoring them to their former abundance. But there is nothing so disappointing as a Spanish town. Shops there were in plenty, but not of the sort we required, with their bright array of *mantas*, and flashy kerchiefs that seemed to flaunt our hunger, as if colour could feed the ravenous appetite we had picked up in Estremenian wilds. What the inhabitants live on remains to the present hour as great a mystery to us, as when we first arrived in the town. A vague rumour reached us that an ox is killed once a year, in June, on the Feast of St. John

the Baptist; but we derived little comfort from the information, seeing it wanted nearly eight months before the next victim could become available for our necessities, and a "Midsummer Night's Dream" could hardly be more unsubstantial, than our prospects of relief from that quarter.

We had found, with much difficulty, a very primitive posada just below the Cathedral, where we purposed taking "such ease" as could be had for a couple of nights; but when I sallied forth with Purkiss on a shopping expedition, partly in the hope of seeing Spanish life in its more intimate haunts, and partly out of deference to the ancient proverb, "Two heads are better than one," we might almost as well have gone foraging into the wilderness, so unsuccessful did our search prove after the commonest necessities of life. Grave doubts respecting the sinfulness of eating anything but bread and garlic began to arise in my mind, as we wandered like beggars from house to house, so much out of fashion did every other species of food seem in this Cathedral town; and when at last some good-natured people told us that neighbour Rodriguez had just killed a nice pig, we felt ready, had it been necessary, to go to the ends

of the earth in compliance with the welcome intelligence, though it would have been a trying journey just at that moment, 7.30 P.M., for men who had ridden all day through the keen air of Estremadura.

Happily the goodman Rodriguez lived at no great distance, down a narrow lane, and having descended under the chaperonage of his sturdy wife into the cellar, where the defunct porker lay in state, we soon purchased a goodly quantity of spare-rib, and returned in triumph to the posada, having previously met with several bottles of Manzanilla, which Mr. Sykes and I hailed as a boon, though Lord Portarlington vowed it was no better than physic.

Only one of the rooms at the posada had glass in the window, and it was altogether one of those hostelries that carry back the mind to the simplicity of medieval accommodation. In my bedroom, which was fortunately large, I counted fifty-eight melons laid up for winter use, five frying-pans, with a supplement of half-a-dozen other culinary items, representing, we may suppose, the useful arts of life, while a couple of guitars suggested the ornamental, and completed the picture.

As a set-off against the comestible disadvan-

tages of Placentia, few towns can boast a situation of rarer beauty, which more than satisfies the expectations called forth by the alleged derivation of its name. It is well remarked by Ford, "Placentia seen from outside is indeed most *pleasing*; here river, rock, and mountain—city, castle, and aqueduct, under a heaven of purest ultramarine, combine to enchant the artist." The stateliest city indeed might be proud of such a site.

The Xerte, clear as crystal, sweeps round three sides, reflecting on its broad bosom the western portion of the picturesque old Roman wall, with its massive semicircular towers; and then through a rugged belt of rock, that recalled some exquisite river-scenery in North Wales, it passes onward to "fresh fields, and pastures new," falling eventually into the Tagus near Alcantara. Three fine bridges span the stream within the space of a mile, adding greatly to the architectural pretensions of the place. To the north, far up the valley, rises a snow-capped range of mountains, while the southeastern hills are covered with olive-groves, vineyards, and gardens, in pleasant contrast to the grey rocks and naked soil that bound the prospect westward.

The day we stayed there (Nov. 1st) was lovely, and having sauntered over the Trujillo bridge, we sat down on a thymy bank, just above the river, where its waters falling over a succession of weirs fill the ear with a soothing, slumberous, influence, perfectly delicious to travellers like us, glad of a day's repose. Some have compared Placentia to Toledo, each city being seated on a platform of rock, and enfolded on three sides by a river. But here all comparison ceases. The Tagus at Toledo flows in a turbid stream, red as brickdust, and the surrounding scenery frowns with an air of sternness and desolation; while the Xerte is purity itself, as it glides among the smiling meadows of Placentia. It was once proposed to set up the capital here instead of at Madrid, an arrangement that would have given Spain a metropolis hardly to be excelled in Europe for beauty, and healthiness of situation; but where would have been the glassy brightness of the Xerte, polluted past recovery by the defilements of a large population?

It being the Feast of All Saints, a grand *funcion* was celebrated at the cathedral, and a stately procession headed by the bishop, with a long train of ecclesiastics, and students from

the neighbouring colleges, carrying crosses, tapers, and banners, swept along through aisle and cloister, singing some of the sweetest Gregorian chaunts I ever heard. The vestments of the Spanish clergy are beautiful, of a chaster style, and much less overloaded with ornament, than those used in other branches of the Roman Communion; and the countenances of the wearers express more mind and refinement than the commonly-received notion of the Spanish priesthood prepared us to expect. Their behaviour, however, during service-time was sadly irreverent; even while taking a part in the procession not a few of them conversed freely, and after staring pertinaciously at the English strangers, it was evident they were making facetious remarks at our expense, though we tried in every way by our demeanour to avoid attracting the notice of the congregation. At last it became so very unpleasant, that having letters to write, I left the church, and thus to my extreme regret missed a sermon preached by some celebrity, not being aware any would be delivered on the occasion. The congregation consisted chiefly of men, a rare occurrence anywhere, more especially in Spain, where the majority of church-goers, who are not very

numerous, consists usually of females. This exception may be accounted for by the preacher's reputation; his manner, I was told, was particularly dignified and quiet, with none of those bursts of declamation we are accustomed to associate with the foreign pulpit; more, in fact, after the best style of English preaching.

In the course of the day, we had time to examine the Cathedral more carefully. It is by no means a large building, of the date 1498, in the florid Gothic so prevalent in some parts of the Peninsula. Its massiveness, and the granite of which it is constructed, impart to it a solemn stateliness, that is very effective. It has, as usual, a double choir, and, like most Spanish churches, contains superb iron-work, especially a *reja* or screen in front of the altar; but there is very little painted glass. At the western extremity stands an interesting chapel, containing arches of great beauty, and from its vaulted roof, figures, heads, &c., project, not where you would expect to see them, at the central bosses, but thrown out along the ribs that ramify from them. Out of the quaint old Romanesque cloisters you enter a round apartment of exquisite beauty, that looked like a chapter-house on a small scale, enriched with

a profusion of stone-carving on moulding and capital, and crowned with a dome. I had time only for a hasty glance, and when we all went hoping to examine it at leisure, it was locked up, and I saw it no more.

Near the town are extensive Roman remains. Going to visit one of them, an aqueduct of fifty-four arches, we came upon a group of shepherds at their mid-day meal. We are continually falling in with similar parties on their way from the mountains of the north, where they spend the summer, to the winter-pastures of Estremadura, and this circumstance alone gives the later months of autumn a peculiar advantage over other seasons for making a tour of the province.

It was a striking picture of pastoral life to see the poor wayworn sheep and saucy goats, with the huge watchdogs, and rough-looking shepherds clad in sheepskins, grouped together in the warm sunshine under the weather-beaten arches of the old aqueduct. Many of the ewes had lambs, October and November being the usual lambing-time in Spain. On the march the shepherds, of whom there are four or five to a flock of twelve or fifteen hundred, have constantly to carry on their shoulders some new-

born lamb, or ailing sheep ; and you seldom pass one of these migratory flocks without observing some incident that reminds you of pictures of the Good Shepherd. Four or five dogs of noble size, and formidable aspect, are attached to each flock, having their necks protected with iron-spiked collars, as the wolf, their worst enemy, always flies at the throat. We conversed with this party of shepherds, if that can be called conversation, which is carried on solely by means of monosyllables, and gestures ; and when we told them we were English, they seemed delighted, and one cried out “ London ” with great vivacity, though not exactly in the tone and accent most commonly heard in England. They appeared to be very good-natured beings, and pressed us urgently to drink out of their leathern bottle, which after the Oriental fashion is universally used in Spain, an invitation we declined with many thanks.

Messrs. O’Shea’s correspondent at Placentia, upon whom Lord Portarlington had occasion to draw, was very civil, and finding we were interested in the antiquities of the place, carried us off to see a convent, which in his estimation was worthy of being classed in that category. Like the generality of religious houses in Spain,

it had been suppressed and emptied of its occupants, and was now converted into a college, but whether ecclesiastical or secular, I cannot recollect. It contained no object of antiquarian interest, though our cicerone, with no small pride and satisfaction, pointed out a spacious staircase, and some far-reaching corridors, gloomy enough to have figured in the most tragic of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances.

In the large court through which we entered, about a hundred lads from sixteen to eighteen, were amusing themselves in various ways, "pitching the bar" being the most popular game. The whole party exhibited an exterior of remarkable dinginess, unrelieved by the smallest scrap of linen, the only article that indicated its existence cropping out at a part of one boy's person, where shirt does not usually make its appearance. We watched them for some time, and I could not help contrasting the joyous light-heartedness, and exuberant fun, that animate the play-ground of a school in our own country, with the lugubrious air pervading this sombre troop of young Spaniards, and their utter lack of that "go," so descriptive of an English schoolboy. As we came away, unmistakable tokens of displeasure

manifested themselves on every side, and sounds expressive of anything but approbation proceeded from the general body of students, while one of the masters, who chanced to be standing by, gave vent to an amount of indignation that was perfectly incomprehensible, as we had neither said, nor done anything which the most perverse ingenuity could distort into an occasion of offence. We could not ask for an explanation, our interpreter, Purkiss, not being with us at the moment; but we made out in a sort of hazy, indistinct way, that the students having expected a present of money from us, took this method of expressing their disappointment, when they saw us leaving the college, without doing so, such a thought never having presented itself to our minds. Every one educated at a public school must recollect the day, when he used to look upon the time-honoured fashion of "tipping" as one of the most precious institutions that form the heritage of Britons, though the donors, it is probable, hardly regard the custom with the same enthusiasm, as the recipients. But to "tip" a whole college at once would be an enterprise, that the most thoughtless schoolboy would stigmatize as a Quixotic extravagance, more especially during a tour in Spain, where the

expenses of the road are ever exceeding the traveller's most liberal estimate.

An occurrence that took place while we were at Placentia, and of which the two servants and Purkiss were eye-witnesses, shocked us exceedingly. They had gone into a wine-shop to make provision for the road, and while standing there with several others until they could be served, a poor woman was brought in, who had just been stabbed by her husband with such severity under the right shoulder-blade, that whenever she attempted to speak, the blood gushed copiously out of her mouth. Not one of the natives offered the least assistance, or expressed the slightest sympathy for the poor sufferer, and when she was taken away to the hospital, several of them burst out into a brutal laugh !

CHAPTER XXIV.

NEXT morning (November 2nd) we were roused at a very early hour by a party of muleteers, who were holding "revel high and loud" in the corridor of the posada, a prevalent practice of their class, to judge from our observation. In most countries evening is the season for carousing and joviality; but the Spanish muleteer's highest flow of spirits seems to set in about four in the morning, which we often found a great bore; and when we would have given anything for a quiet hour, then did jest, laughter, and snatches of old song sound forth, not exactly in the gentle tones of Master Bottom's "sucking dove," but with a vehemence and energy that effectually banished sleep. We felt anxious to start betimes, having a very wild district to traverse to-day; but several obstacles intervened, the principal being a long altercation about the bill, and it was ten o'clock before we

crossed the Trujillo bridge, bidding adieu to fair Placentia, and its lovely river, which looked more than ever attractive, as it gleamed in the morning sunshine.

Our next point was Trujillo, distant about sixty miles. The route lay over one of the least-populated portions of sparsely-peopled Estremadura, through scenery that differed altogether from anything we had yet seen. On reaching the summit of the uplands enclosing the valley of the Xerte to the south, we looked over a region where Nature is left entirely to herself, and you may ride a live-long summer-day, without ever seeing more than perhaps one lone group of houses, or any other indication of man's permanent presence. An undulating succession of low swelling hills, reminding us in their outline of the "rolling prairies of the Far West," as travellers describe them, stretched out before us for many a league, clothed with an expanse of gum-cistus, which in some directions seemed interminable; while farther on, Nature's own hand had laid out the masses of cork-tree, and ilex, with which the more open ground was interspersed, after the fashion of an English park. Perfect stillness reigned on every side of this vast solitude, imparting a degree of grandeur to the

landscape, which its general features could never produce in any other situation, and the action of the sun on that wide breadth of gum-cistus filled the air with a delicious fragrance, as if earth were wafting up to Heaven an unceasing cloud of incense, in honour of her Almighty Creator.

Sometimes our path lay over a long tract of sand and stones, running like a highway for miles, where, during the downpours of the rainy season, a torrent may have taken its capricious course. All this country, it is said, was once under the plough, and judging from the progress Spain has made during the last ten years, and the extensive clearance of waste places carried on in other provinces, it may again become subject to its dominion.

About mid-day we reached the summit of the Puerta de de la Serrana, having, for more than a mile, had to scramble up a steeply-sloping bed of stones outrivalling the roughest portions of the well-known Chesil Beach near Weymouth. Not long ago this spot was notorious for robbery and murder, the brigands having here the double advantage of a look-out over both sides of the mountain at once, in addition to an ascent each way of such extreme difficulty, from the badness

of the road, that escape was simply impossible. Happily, the whole gang has been routed out by the Guardia Civil, and the worst peril we met with was caused by the rocks and stones that blocked up the road. The top of the Pass commands a very striking panorama, the cistus-clad wastes looking more like grousing-hills infinitely magnified, than any other scenery with which I am acquainted; but instead of the purple tints of heather, the atmosphere is tinged with a bluish hue, thrown out apparently from the foliage of that shrub, and producing a most singular, I might almost say, unearthly, effect. We had ample time to contemplate the various features of the scene, embracing not only a grand sweep of verdant wilderness towards Placentia, and the frontiers of Portugal, but of the valley of the Tagus also, as it opened out far away to the eastward, while we sat eating our mid-day meal, ensconced in extemporized bowers of fruit-laden arbutus, with which the mountain is clothed.

The descent carried us over another villanous road to San Carlos, a deplorable-looking hamlet of five or six houses, our proximity to the Tagus, which for hours we had surmised from the for-

mation of the country, being now at every turn more clearly indicated, and our curiosity proportionably stimulated; though in the deep ravines, by which the country all around is furrowed, we could, as yet, catch no glimpse of its actual presence.

We were getting quite excited with expectation, and pushed on more rapidly than was safe over such a road, when at last the river burst upon us in full view, its broad stream newly replenished by the waters of the Tiedar, and cleaving a path through the very heart of mountains, which, rising abruptly from its brink, embank it on either side. A noble old bridge of fine proportions, and massive construction, spans both river and ravine at once, while below, the ruins of Monfrague, an old feudal castle, crown a distant rock overhanging the stream. We hailed the Tagus as an old friend, having now traversed its banks repeatedly, at Aranjuez, Toledo, Talavera, to bid a final adieu to it here, at Puente del Cardenal.

At one time it had been our intention to make our way to Seville by Alcantara, for the purpose of seeing the old Roman bridge, which Ford declares is worth going a hundred miles to visit.

This detour, however, would have occupied more time than we could possibly spare, and the plan was consequently relinquished.

The bridge we were now going to cross is called Puente del Cardenal, from having been built, with three others along this route, by Cardinal Juan de Carvajal, a native of Placentia, where his family were among the magnates of their day. One cannot help believing he must have been a good and benevolent man, who, for the convenience of a thinly-populated neighbourhood, where bridle-roads alone exist, and peasants are the most frequent travellers, erected so costly a work, far out of the world's ken. Jeremy Taylor reckons it among acts of mercy to repair highways, and bridges; much more, therefore, does their original construction, especially in such a country as Spain, deserve a place in the catalogue.

After sunset, we heard, for the first time, the *cicāla*, a species of cricket possessing vocal powers almost as shrill as a railway whistle; there were scores of these insects pouring forth on every side their several contributions to swell the general chorus; and the combined result, as may easily be conceived, was somewhat overwhelming. We proposed halting for the night

at Torrejon el Rubio, a hamlet in the midst of the wilds, where we arrived between eight and nine, having, since sunset, travelled over roads bad beyond conception, which hardly man or beast could have faced had there been daylight to disclose their real condition. But habit and a Spanish horse will carry one through almost everything.

Torrejon had surely never received such a cavalcade as ours, and the good people were sorely perplexed to find us accommodation. The posada being a decidedly questionable-looking abode for any purpose save dinner, we had to hunt up and down for beds. Mr. Sykes was taken in at one private house, Lord Portarlington and myself at another, where we were stowed away in a tiny room about nine feet square, just large enough for two beds. The ceiling was ornamented in a manner peculiar to the Peninsula, with a goodly array of melons, which hung like pendants in some Gothic roof, though we cannot say the effect was either as artistic, or the general arrangement carried out with equal consideration for the convenience of the inmates. Whichever way we turned, bump went our heads against some green mass; and if our worthy host, Tomas Sanchez' melons did

not keep as well as usual last winter, it will, no doubt, be owing to the repeated collisions that took place on the night of November 2nd.

Despite Purkiss's best endeavours, a considerable time elapsed before dinner was ready, as indeed was generally the case throughout our expedition. We found such delays more exhausting and wearisome than the longest ride, and many were the complaints we used to pour forth on such occasions, without ever being able, however, with the collective wisdom of the whole party, to devise any better arrangement. It is thought unadvisable in Spain to divide forces, by sending on some one to the next halting-place with the baggage to secure beds and prepare dinner, a plan that would have obviated this inconvenience. Whenever we had the good fortune to find an inn capable of supplying anything in the shape of a plain dinner, we did very well, and in a good meal and early bed soon forgot the fatigue of a ten or twelve hours' ride. But on most occasions the case was widely different with us, arriving, as we did often at eight or nine o'clock at some posada where a larder is a thing unheard of, and you can find nothing to eat, except what is furnished from your own stores. You have not even the travel-

ler's never-failing resource in other countries, bread, and cheese, or butter, such articles being unknown over the greater part of Spain. For weeks we saw no butter; frequently milk was not to be had, and on asking for it in some places we were told none would be forthcoming before Easter! Every preparation, therefore, had to be made after our arrival, and this in a very unexpeditious manner, as the most available implement in Purkiss's *batterie de cuisine* was a frying-pan we had brought from Bayonne, to which he had generally to attach a stick by way of a supplementary handle, on account of the heat of an open fire. It was with this scanty apparatus that legs of mutton whole, chine of pork, chops, fowls, hares, partridges, rabbits, and such-like "small deer," were each in their turn converted into food for us. As a natural consequence, we frequently dined at ten, and went to bed at midnight, which was not the best way of preparing for the work of the morrow.

I remember being very much struck, years ago, with a statement of Disraeli's in "Contarini Fleming," which at the moment I thought exaggerated—that the Spanish peasantry are the cleanest in Europe. Our Spanish experiences continually verified this assertion; for though

often, as at Torrejon, our sleeping-quarters were rough and primitive to a degree, we could always lie down with a conviction of their perfect cleanliness, a remarkable fact, I think, when the isolation of the country and the warmth of its climate are kept in mind.

Torrejon had nothing to detain us next morning, and through *dehesas* and *despoblados* (sheep-walks and uninhabited wastes) we continued our way to Trujillo, the park-like scenery of the ilex-woods being the predominating feature of the country. Soon after starting, Mr. Sykes discovered two enormous vultures, sitting, like birds of evil omen, on a decayed stump, and when our approach scared them away, it was with a heavy lethargic flight, as if they had been eating more than was good for them; while chattering magpies, whiter and larger than in England, and the pretty little jays we had seen before, were perpetually flitting across our path. We passed several streams to-day, one of them, the Vid, where we made our noon-tide halt *al fresco*, being of sufficient volume to require a bridge of considerable dimensions. Along the banks of these streams lay pleasant meadows, refreshing the eye with their greenness, which the sombre hues of the all-perva-

ding ilex threw out by contrast with vivid effect. Almost the whole way between the Vid and Trujillo, we seemed to be riding through a vast domain attached to feudal castle, or princely mansion, so perfectly did the size and arrangement of the timber, and configuration of the ground, recal the general characteristics of an English park. Our imagination all the time pictured the existence of some abode worthy of the situation, lying concealed among the recesses of the forest, and we were quite prepared to see it any moment, though we never did!

Hereabout Pizarro, when a lad, used to feed his father's pigs, and in the long double range of pigsties at Aldea del Obispo, a bleak village within sight of, though unsheltered by, the extensive woods of the district, we perchance saw the spot where he once had lodged his acorn-eating herds.

At length we came out upon the high-road between Madrid and Badajos, in sight of Trujillo, though, as we found in due time, we were still a weary distance from it. As we rode along, with no object to interest or engage our attention in the dreary wind-swept plateau that encircles Trujillo, we observed a narrow black

line extending across the road, here about thirty-five feet wide. On closer inspection we found it consisted of ants, which in grand procession were streaming over the ground by myriads, one division going to our left hand, and the rest in the contrary direction, each individual ant giving its neighbour a nudge in passing. The destination and cause of this movement we failed to discover.

A few days before, while walking near Cuacos, we had enjoyed another opportunity of studying natural history, though not in so pacific a phase as that exhibited on the Trujillo road. Two beetles were fighting furiously by the wayside, one being very large, the other half his size. As Englishmen we instinctively gave the little one the benefit of our good wishes, though in reality the combatants were more equally matched, from their relative circumstances, than their difference in size led us at first to conclude. The big beetle had, in truth, a double duty to perform; not only did he repel the incessant assaults of his nimble antagonist, keeping his front towards him constantly with great adroitness, and pom-melling him lustily all the while, but he was moreover engaged in rolling, with his hind legs, the husk of a chestnut (which we suspected to

be the gage of battle between the belligerents) up a bank so steep that it must have assumed in his eyes the dimensions of a precipice. It was quite astonishing how well he executed this complicated manœuvre. We did not witness the final settlement of the quarrel, not wishing to detain our kind host, the Cura, who did not seem to participate our interest in this insect duel.

CHAPTER XXV.

TRUJILLO is not only a quaint old town, with narrow, tortuous streets, full of picturesque houses, but, what at that particular moment had more attraction for us than any amount of antiquarian interest or pictorial effect, it contains the best inn we met with between Madrid and Seville. While we were in quest of it, who should turn up but our Talavera acquaintance, the little French equestrian, good-natured as ever, and by his aid we were soon installed in the unwonted luxury of rooms with glazed windows, carpets, and a sufficiency of chairs and tables. Indeed, so comfortable did we find our quarters, that it was almost provoking to quit them on the morrow, but we felt anxious to reach Merida by Sunday, and we had still before us a journey of two days.

Next morning, Friday, November 4th, we lionized Trujillo in a most hasty fashion, which

was little better than not seeing it at all. The mansion built by Pizarro after the conquest of Peru, stands in the *Plaza*, and, though indifferently situated, is a handsome building of freestone, decorated after the Spanish custom with boldly-sculptured coats of arms, and other heraldic devices, the most conspicuous being a couple of pigs feeding under an oak-tree, a badge that not only recalled his origin and early employment, but proved, moreover, that the conqueror of Peru was not ashamed to own himself the son of a swineherd. We searched several churches for his tomb, which, according to Ford, is in Santa Maria de la Concepcion, but found nothing corresponding to his description.

Several old houses invited examination, had time permitted ; but we were obliged to content ourselves with a hasty glance at them, and at the towers, both Moorish and Lombard, as well as at ancient gateways of massive Roman construction which we fell in with while perambulating the town. It is the worst place I ever was in for finding one's way, which is seldom a difficulty to me. On my return from the upper town I wished to revisit the Square for the purpose of having one more glimpse of Pizarro's house ; but so narrow are the streets,

and so lofty the houses, that, in spite of repeated attempts, I could not find my way there, being all the time within two hundred yards of the spot! In fact, I lost myself completely, passing and repassing the same point four times, and had I not chanced to emerge upon the town wall in sight of our inn, it is impossible to say when I should have found an exit out of this labyrinth of streets.

During the night it had blown quite a hurricane, accompanied by heavy rain, and when we set off soon after ten, it was under what sailors would call "a dirty sky," with every sign of bad weather, so that Trujillo, which from its situation has a very bleak, cheerless air, looked this morning miserably chill and storm-beaten. At Placentia, two days before, I had noticed the sun rising amid angry-looking clouds, called in Gloucestershire "the reds," which flashed from one end of heaven to the other. Every land has its peculiar weather-wisdom, which a stranger cannot acquire speedily. Not knowing, therefore, what "the reds" might presage in Spain, I did not venture to prognosticate their consequences. In England rain would certainly have fallen the self-same day, but the Peninsular clerk of the weather seems

to be a person of more deliberate action, for eight-and-forty hours elapsed, yet not a drop fell, only, however, to descend upon our unlucky heads with treble violence on the third day after. Our ride to Montanches lay through a bare, treeless region, utterly without shelter of any kind, and just as we were wending our spiritless way over its most exposed portion, the storm burst upon us with almost tropical fury, till men and beasts fairly streamed like water-spouts, so that altogether we had very much the appearance of a row of gigantic gurgoyles in full action. The storm lasted about an hour and a half, and I was thankful to escape with no worse damage than a pair of wet legs, thanks to my good cloak, though several of the party were thoroughly drenched. As soon as the rain ceased, the sun and wind, not being on this occasion antagonists, as in the old fable, united their powers for our relief, and soon made matters more comfortable.

There being no posada in the village, where we made our mid-day halt, our whole party was received with much kindness at the principal farm-house. The mistress, an old lady of superior manners, and a good deal of quiet dignity, placed her house and all it contained at our

disposal, making her two maids wait on us ; and when her husband came in, finding to his surprise the whole place full of strangers, he also gave us a cordial welcome. A young man dropped in soon after, whom we set down as the village doctor on seeing him feel the old lady's pulse. He turned out to be her son. One of the things, which struck us here, as elsewhere, was the abundance, and excellence of the household linen, reminding us of the olden days of spinsters and homespun in England. The kindness of this worthy couple forms quite a pleasant point of retrospect amid the dreary, uninteresting district of saturated corn-land, through which most of our route from Trujillo to Montanches led us, and we were really sorry to say good-bye to them.

Montanches soon came into sight, perched upon a platform of rock, that rose like an islet, out of a level expanse of arable plain, and looking close at hand. But experience had begun to teach us, that in Spain to see a place, and to be near it, are two utterly different things, and it was two hours after nightfall ere we rode into the market-place of this central depôt for "hams, and other bucolic meats of Estremadura."

The hams of Montanches are not only, as Ford informs his readers, world-famous in the

present day, but they have enjoyed their celebrity at least a couple of centuries. From the time of Anacreon downwards, inspiration has often been sought in the wine-cup; but it was reserved for the accomplished author of "The Handbook in Spain," to discover, first of all Englishmen, another of its sources in the flesh-pots of Montanches, following therein the example of the prolific dramatist, Lope de Vega, who never found himself quite up to the mark for composition, until he had refreshed himself with a good rasher. Ford's account of a Montanches ham is one of the most glowing passages in his whole book. Kindling with the fire of poetic rapture, he assures the reader, whom the description makes positively hungry, that "the fat when properly boiled looks like melted topazes, and the flavour defies language, although we have dined on one this very day in order to secure accuracy and inspiration. The Montanches hams are superb, and it would perplex a gastronomic Paris to which to adjudge the prize—whether to the *jamon dulce* of Alpujarras, the *tocino* of Galicia, the *chorizo* of Vique, or the transcendental hams of this locality." And lest it should be imagined Mr. Ford's Pegasus had taken the bit between his teeth, and run

away with his rider on this occasion, I will repeat the testimony of the sober-minded Duc de St. Simon, though even he cannot approach the subject, without catching a spark of poetical fervour :—" Ces jambons ont un parfum si admirable, un goût si relevé, et si vivifiant, qu'on en est surpris ; il est impossible de rien manger si exquis."

Now I will appeal to any candid reader (if I am fortunate enough to have one endowed with so admirable a quality) whether, after all this flourish of trumpets, we were not perfectly justified in expecting to find at least *something to eat* at Montanches. The sequel will show how far so reasonable an expectation was satisfied.

Matters looked rather ominous, methought, when we were told that this town of more than five thousand souls has only one posada, a fact that did not indicate any great amount of communication with the rest of the world. There of course we went, only to be disappointed, it being so crowded with scampish-looking company, that we had to seek accommodation elsewhere without much regret. We next tried the Cura's, but his reverence being out, we had for three-quarters of an hour to play the agreeable to his

housekeeper, a shrewd clever woman, who seemed highly amused with our small attempts at conversation. At last in came the Cura, Don José M. de Orozco y Bulnes, a man of good family, even in Spain. He was very polite, but having only one bed to offer us, could do little to satisfy our necessities. So Purkiss was despatched to the Alcalde (the Mayor of the town), to inquire whether he could do anything to aid houseless travellers. The news of our arrival must have circulated extensively, for in a few minutes the room where we sat was quite filled by the elders of the place, who came dropping in one after another, the Cura's brother among them, with the evident intention of holding a sort of non-professional inquest on the wayfarers, whom the chances of travel had brought within their coasts. In proof that we were "true men," we produced our passports, and letter of recommendation to the Guardia Civil; and it was highly amusing to observe the semi-official air, with which each in his turn inspected those documents. Not one of them however had the good-nature to render us substantial assistance by getting us beds, and what was still more extraordinary, none appeared to entertain the notion, that after a ride of nine or ten hours, with a

good wetting to boot, we might possibly be hungry and glad of some refreshment, now that it was drawing near nine P.M. It was evidently the last thing they were going to think of. They had all eaten their supper, had comfortable beds to get into, whenever they chose ; till then it was an agreeable diversion to their monotonous existence to look at, and talk over the strange Englishmen, who were wandering through the country in a manner so unaccountable to a genuine Spaniard. Altogether, it was the most ludicrous scene I ever played part in, and, despite hunger and fatigue, irresistibly entertaining. I seemed all the while to be asking myself unconsciously, "Can all this be real? Are we at a play, or holding an interview with some Polynesian Islanders, or are we surrounded by the fantastic imagery of a dream, with its sensations of utter helplessness?" Had we been tied hand and foot, we could not be more at the mercy of these natives, who stared at us, talked us over, came in and went out with as much nonchalance, as if they had actually paid us for exhibiting ourselves, and were now only receiving their money's worth.

An incident of a somewhat similar nature befel Lady Eastlake at Narva, while on her

way to Esthonia, and is described in her charming "Letters from the Baltic."

Presently his worship the Alcalde appeared, attended by a retinue of humble friends, when the recital of our story, accompanied by a reperusal of documents, recommenced as a matter of course, making a fresh demand upon our almost exhausted patience. Suddenly a worthy elder conceived the bright idea, that a couple of beds might be had at the house of a respectable old lady of his acquaintance, who was accustomed to take in lodgers. Thither we adjourned at once, to find ourselves in a totally different atmosphere, and to meet with every kindness and attention from our warm-hearted hostess, in refreshing contrast to the cool indifference we had hitherto experienced, and oh ! how pleasant it was to have a comfortable wash, and to put on dry things !

It was ten o'clock before we returned to the Cura's, where Purkiss was preparing dinner, and there to our horror we found about twenty persons, men and women, the "quality" of the place apparently, drawn up to see us dine. The room was as full as it could hold, and there did they all remain the whole time we were at dinner, making their observations, having evi-

dently very much the same tone of mind as the famous Mrs. John Gilpin ; for though on pleasure they were bent (and thoroughly in their way did they enjoy the entertainment we were providing them), they still retained “the frugal mind” of that excellent housewife. Not a single contribution did any of them make to the scanty meal which our own stores supplied, with the exception of a few grapes, which, when fruit is scarce, might cost perhaps a penny, and when it is abundant, as was then the case, *nil* ! Some of our wine was offered them, and when they found it was not champagne, a luxury none of us had tasted since Madrid, they were evidently disappointed, and seemed to consider it not worth drinking.

It would have been an insult to the *genius loci* of Montanches to omit the purchase of some of its “franscendental hams ;” so a couple of well-recommended ones were secured, weighing about fourteen pounds apiece, and costing rather more than a shilling a pound, and never did travellers make a better investment. The first ham was dressed at Merida, and proving of first-rate excellence served as the main stay of our commissariat all the way to Seville, while the other travelled nearly to Granada, each in

its turn coming in most conveniently on all occasions, sometimes cold, sometimes in the shape of a broil. Judging from their sweetness of flavour, we fancied they must have been cured chiefly with sugar, there being hardly a perceptible taste of salt in them.

According to Ford's theory, after eating so much Montanches ham, we ought to turn out first-rate Poets, and if any of the party does hereafter astonish the world in that character, we shall know whence this inspiration has taken its rise.

The ruined castle, that dominates the town, commands a glorious view, though a dense fog concealed the larger portion of it on the morning of November 5th, and Montanches would make an excellent centre for exploring the neighbourhood, those necessary postulates board and lodging being first granted; indeed our landlady told us that an English artist, whose name she could not recollect, had stayed with her a considerable time for the purpose of sketching.

The Cura in parting, kindly offered us a letter to a friend of his at Merida, our next destination, who would probably spare us some wine from his own cellars, to replenish our exhausted stock; and as such an introduction is always

serviceable in Spain, where travellers are more dependent on any chance civility than in other countries, we gladly availed ourselves of his offer.

Our ride at first was dreary enough, through a succession of ploughed fields under a canopy of fog, that intercepted every ray of sunshine, and chilled us to the very bone. In time circumstances improved, and we entered upon sunny woodlands, where herds of swine were doing their best to sustain the reputation of the Montanches hams, by feeding on the crop of acorns grown on the surrounding cork-trees, and ilices. After traversing extensive copses of arbutus, laden with festoons of lovely fruit, scarlet, and primrose-coloured, we descended into a verdant little valley watered by a trout-stream; and there, tempted by the abundance of good pasture, we spent a pleasant hour in refreshing man and beast. Resuming our travel with renewed spirit, about seven we crossed the arid plain that encircles Merida, entering the town near the old Roman aqueduct, which, "spanning the earth at broken intervals with colossal stride," stood out gaunt and grand in the dim moonlight.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WE had been looking forward with great satisfaction to our Sunday's rest at Merida, having ridden during the last week about a hundred and forty miles, which, at our slow pace, represented a good many hours' travel; and it was no agreeable surprise to find in so considerable a town, on the great highway between Madrid and Badajoz, only two wretched posadas, both being too full to take us in. After some trouble, however, we found a *Casa de Pupillos*, or boarding-house, that was tolerably comfortable, and there we remained till Monday at noon, enjoying our well-earned repose.

Ford says of it, "Merida is the Rome of Spain, in respect of stupendous monuments of antiquity." Among these may be mentioned, a noble bridge of eighty-one arches, and 2575 feet long, over the Guadiana; extensive walls, finer, Mr. Sykes thought, than any in Rome; a

theatre open to the air, in very perfect condition, with a circus near it; a most curious subterranean passage leading to the river; and last, but of greatest interest to us all, the magnificent aqueduct we passed on entering the night before. It is built of huge granite blocks, and bricks of a rich warm red—a combination that produced excellent effects of colouring. It has three tiers of arches, the highest rising to an elevation of about eighty feet. Ford's description is so admirable, that I am tempted to quote it:—"The magnitude of these colossal monuments is very impressive; they are the standards the Romans have left, whereby to measure their ambition, power, and intellect." There is indeed a sermon in these stones, and the idea of the once Mistress of the World rules even in decay. How, when all this greatness has vanished, can any one fret about the petty griefs of his brief hour? This is indeed a lonely scene, a thing of the past: here let the stranger muse of a still evening, as we have often done,—these monuments, like himself, have nothing to do with the present Emeritan, on whom their poetry, and attractions are lost. These mighty relics, which have defied ages, are of a different date and people, and have outlived the names of their founders. Yet there

they stand grey and shattered, but upright, supporting nothing, now, but the weight of centuries. Above them is spread, like a curtain, the blue sky, beautiful and bright as at the first dawn of creation, for Nature decays not; yet never, perhaps, were these arches, even when perfect, so touchingly picturesque as now; the Vandal has destroyed their proportions, but Time—and who paints like it?—has healed the scars with lichens, and tinted the weather-beaten fragments. Their former glory is indeed subdued, but how tender the pity, which the past conjures up!”

It was on Sunday afternoon (November 6th), that we visited the scene our countryman so poetically describes. The air breathed a soft autumnal warmth, and the sky wore as bright a blue, as when he sat there years ago meditating on Rome’s by-gone grandeur, while above our heads an untold number of sparrow-hawks, that nestle in safety within the weather-worn nooks and crevices of the aqueduct, careered through the air like swallows in the summer sunshine.

Its lateral surface, which would otherwise want variety, is broken into bold alternations of light and shade by massive buttresses running

from the base to the summit. Had not the world become so accustomed to see the remains of past ages barbarously treated, it would hardly be credited that the Emeritans, as Ford calls the people of Merida, have actually pulled down several of these buttresses for the mere sake of the stone.

The finest view, perhaps, in all Merida, is commanded by a terrace at the back of the *Posada de las Animas*, close to the great Roman bridge. Below flows the river, spanned by the eighty-one arches, which insure a safe passage during the widest-spread inundation. A square tower of the same date, but pierced in Moorish days by a horse-shoe arch, stands at its townward extremity, and serves as a *tête de pont*; while a noble wall rising directly out of the water, and terminating in a broad quay, flanks the bridge to the south. The salient points of view as you turn towards the town, are distinctively Roman, a solitary palm-tree, the pride of some burgher's garden, alone excepted, and they stand out with all the more prominence from the uninteresting character of the general landscape. The Guadiana flowing between low banks has no more beauty than is inseparable from every stream of pure water; and as the eye

takes in a further range of country, it sees nothing more attractive than a featureless expanse of corn-land. Altogether we perfectly coincided with Ford's opinion, that, for ordinary tourists, there is but one day's occupation at Merida.

This being the last town of any importance before reaching Seville, we had to think of the provend, and Purkiss delivered the note from Montanches, hoping the gentleman to whom it was addressed would kindly help us, as we had searched the whole town for "the excellent red wine, something between claret and burgundy," so highly praised by Ford, without discovering anything better than the produce of the last vintage, now about three months old, and consequently unfit for use. Don Bulnes' friend was unfortunately too ill to be seen, but the lady of the house most kindly sent as a present, two magnums of excellent wine with a polite message, remarking at the same time to Purkiss, how strange it was Don Bulnes could imagine any of the wine, specified in his note, should be still left, seeing he had himself finished the very last bottle, when he was at their house on Merida fair-day!

Thankful indeed were we for this most welcome supply, and having proved its excellence

at dinner, sent it out when the things were removed, to be put up as usual with the rest of the stores for use on the road. Nothing more was thought of it till dinner-time next day at Andramalejo, when one of us asked, "Where is the Merida wine?" "That was all finished, my Lord, at Merida." "Not by us certainly, nor a quarter of it, one bottle being perfectly full, and the other nearly so, when they were removed." It turned out that the landlady and her maid, having cleared the table, had immediately taken the two decanters into the kitchen perfectly empty, greatly to the astonishment of the servants, who naturally wondered what could have become of all that wine! None of us, I need hardly say, ever saw a drop of it again; and we not only lost the lady's seasonable present, but moreover must have lain for twenty-four hours under the tacit imputation of having drunk an inordinate quantity.

We left Merida at mid-day, Monday, November 7th. Crossing the Roman bridge, and turning to the left, a mile from the town, we quitted the Badajoz road, taking another running directly south. The country improves on ascending a gentle slope, which commands an extensive prospect. At our feet lay the great plain north

of the Sierra Morena, its surface broken here and there by isolated mountains, which rose in abrupt blocks out of the dead level, a characteristic feature of the South of Spain, where almost every breadth of champaign country is dotted with these detached elevations. One of these masses to the south-east had a very striking appearance, its height, which was considerable, being all effective in consequence of its position. We were unable to ascertain its name, having unfortunately no maps with us, but such as were almost worthless, their principal office being to mislead us perpetually.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TNO-DAY we had a short march of only five leagues, and the Church of Andramalejo rose before us nearly the whole distance like a beacon, pointing out our destination for the night. This neighbourhood is a very Goshen of wheat-culture, and the tillers of its soil have the reputation of being some of the richest farmers in Spain. It is, however, a most tedious district to ride through, and, at our slow pace, we found those five leagues far more fatiguing than some of our longest journeys through scenery of more interest and variety.

Andramalejo is an overgrown village, full of goodly houses, some of which we longed to take possession of for the night, and inhabited by well-to-do people, with a decided turn for finery, if we might judge from the ample stores of haberdashery displayed in the mercers' shops, which, as in most Spanish towns, seemed to

monopolize the commerce of the place; while we poor hungry wayfarers looked in vain, as we rode along its streets, for some indication of comestible merchandise. Even the posada was quite of an inferior description, though the people of the house, Valencians, were very civil, and did their best to make us comfortable. Muleteers abounded in every corner. Just before going to bed, I looked out of our sitting-room, and at that moment the posada presented a picture that would have delighted the eye of an artist. Like most inns of its class, it was divided into three parallel compartments, arranged somewhat like the nave and aisles of a church. The central, and principal division, contained an open fire-place, surrounded by a group of people at supper, under the dim light of a lamp suspended from the roof. The floor, I may almost say, was paved with somnolent muleteers, several of them having chosen "their lodging upon the cold ground," close to an open door, large enough for a barn, through which streamed a flood of moonlight; while on all sides arose those peculiar sounds, which sleeping humanity utters, though so conscientiously averse to acknowledging them.

Next day saw us on our road to Zafra, and

just outside of the town, near some stagnant pools, which the recent rains had replenished, we passed the largest assemblage of washer-women we had seen since leaving Madrid. Every family at Andramalejo seemed to be celebrating its washing-week. There must have been, at least, a hundred water-nymphs collected on the occasion, but by the time I had counted seventy-five, such peals of laughter arose from every group at the idea, I suppose, of a traveller stopping to number them, that my feeble powers of arithmetic were put to flight by such a demonstration, and the process was never completed.

We had now entered one of the great olive-districts, and, although the tree has little beauty of form or foliage, its groves serve at any rate to clothe the nakedness of the landscape, and redeem it from utter monotony. Ever since leaving Merida, we had kept the high road, and were constantly meeting muleteers, and other travellers, with whom, according to the pleasant custom of the country, we used to exchange salutations. One of these parties hailed us with more than common animation, accompanied by a profusion of smiles and gestures, crying out at the same time, "Placentia! Placentia!"

having seen us, it appeared, previously in that neighbourhood. They were then on their way into this oil-growing country, and, having completed their purchases, were now returning home into the northern wilds of Estremadura.

The day was so warm, that any chance strip of shade along the way-side proved most welcome. Before reaching Zafra, we passed the town of Todos los Santos (All Saints), girdled with a belt of gardens and orchards, in a high state of cultivation.

Zafra nestles under the southern slope of the hill, which, on the north, overhangs Los Santos, and is one of the best country-towns we have seen anywhere in Spain. It is thriving and clean, with an excellent boarding-house, kept by very civil, attentive people. Nowhere indeed were we better off, than at Zafra; for, in addition to the comfort of large, well-furnished rooms, we enjoyed, and in good time too, the rare luxury of a roast leg of mutton, which Purkiss had cleverly managed to cook in the frying-pan, and as it was no bigger than a similar joint of English lamb, we consumed it to the very bone with great satisfaction and thankfulness.

None but those, who have made a riding-tour

in this hungry land, the very name of which Ford wittily derives from *σπάvιος*, destitute, can understand the important aspect the commissariat assumes in the incidents of each day.

In other countries, scenery, art, antiquities, national manners, are naturally the principal objects of a tourist's consideration. Inns, dinners, and such like necessities of our lower nature, may safely be taken for granted; they are sure to turn up, sooner or later, without taking much thought about them. In Spain, however, such pleasant freedom from care would issue in starvation *pur et simple*. We tried it once, and were so thoroughly dissatisfied with the result, that we never repeated the experiment.

One of the first things that strikes a reader of Ford, unversed in *cosas de España*, is the pertinacity with which he insists on attention to the provend. While making out your route, and acquiring other preliminary information, you become perfectly bored with the incessant repetition of this advice, which the Handbook elevates to the dignity of a fundamental principle; and, like most novices, you decry the warnings of experience as so much "tedious prattle." But ere you have been a week in the

saddle, you discover the greatness of your error, you feel to the full the truth of the definition, "Man is a cooking animal," and during the remainder of your sojourn in Spain, "the Art of Dining" will rank in your mind as only second to the Fine Arts.

This will account for the prominence occupied by the commissariat in the record of most Spanish tours. One author, and he, too, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, actually calls his book after a well-known national dish, an incontestable proof of the interest with which the culinary department is invested in the eyes of wanderers through the Peninsula!

Let this then be my apology for so frequently introducing the subject. A tour in Spain, which omits all reference to the provend, may be pleasant reading for fairies, elves, and other sprites, to whom the sensation of hunger is unknown; but to substantial humanity, with its daily necessities, such a book will be only a delusion and a snare, giving no information on one important particular, nor showing the reader how he may travel through the country without coming to an untimely end.

I cannot give a better idea of the superior civilization of Zafra, than by stating that it

actually contains a *café*, which was kept by a very good-natured old dame, whose cellar supplied our slender stores with a few bottles of sherry. At intervals during the night, I had heard various sounds in the house, as if some of the inmates were still up, and, on inquiring in the morning what had been going on, was told that two of the women sat up the live-long night to dry and iron some linen of ours, which, at Merida, had been sent home wet as it came from the Guadiana, and was now in danger of becoming mildewed. The payment received for this seasonable service does not, I think, detract from the good-nature of the action, more especially in a country where industry is supposed not to be too common.

Before setting off next day (November 9) for Monasterio, we went to see the old castle, built by the Figueroas family, but now, we understood, in the possession of the Duque de Medina Celi. From the battlements we gained a very pretty view of the town, which, enclosed by gardens and olive groves, lies sheltered and snug under the low hills that screen it from the north. One of the most conspicuous objects is the bull-ring, a building we hardly expected to

find in a remote country town, of some five thousand souls. The taste for bull-fighting seems, however, to increase as we approach Andalusia; and yesterday, at Andramalejo, we noticed quite an extensive *Plaza del Toros*, suggesting the notion that, in these parts, agriculture and tauromachy flourish in amicable companionship.

There was time only for a hasty inspection of the town, with its smart drapers' shops (the pet line of business in Spain), one of which we entered. It was arranged with great taste, and opened into a *patio*, or Moorish court, in the centre of the house, which looked charmingly bright and gay, with marble fountain and gold-fish, orange trees and beds of violets. At another, we bought an almanac for 1860, and, on comparing it with an English one, found that in Estremadura, during November, the day is longer, by an hour and eighteen minutes, than in England at the same season, an immense advantage to wayfaring people like us.

Olive groves afford the only relief to the monotony of the great corn-plains extending from Zafra to Monasterio. It is a land of corn

and oil, where farmers thrive, and travellers are bored.

We were now travelling along what is styled by courtesy a highway, being such, however, only by fits and starts; as a mile of good road was often succeeded by a league or so of holes, ruts, and quagmires, where passengers in the diligence are obliged to hold on like grim death, if they would escape a simultaneous dislocation of their whole system. Spanish road-making, except on the Royal lines, which are generally excellent, appears to be an intermittent fever, with intervals of varying and uncertain duration. While the fit lasts, a mile or two, here and there, are constructed in an admirable manner, the adjoining portions being left in such deplorable condition, that, on approaching them, you seem to be suddenly exchanging a good firm road for a ploughed swamp, where any amount of disaster may befall you.

Several times to-day I was altogether in doubt, being somewhat ahead of the party, whether I was still in the road, or had diverged into the adjacent fields, as, in fact, even diligences are often obliged to do, to avoid some "slough of despond" more than commonly dan-

gerous. Many of the carriage-roads in Spain enable one to realize what perils and difficulties used to beset the traveller in England in the days of our forefathers, and how unconscious we are of the blessings we daily enjoy in the excellence of our highways.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IT was a long ride to Monasterio, and when we reached it more than two hours after nightfall, it was to find the very worst accommodation we had yet fallen in with anywhere. Short of lying on the floor, nothing could be worse, and as it was in a private house, to which our host at Zafra had given us an introduction, we could not, without perhaps giving offence, have recourse to the various expedients for bettering our condition, which would have been available in a posada. Our letter of introduction was addressed to the municipal secretary of the place, a functionary something like the town-clerk of an English borough, who, having no sufficient accommodation in his own house, transferred us to the hospitality of his married daughter, for whom he did the honours after a fashion perfectly overwhelming to us wayworn and hungry travellers. Sinbad the Sailor's Old

Man of the Sea was hardly a greater bore to that "ancient mariner," than this gentleman proved to us that evening. He had the most confirmed habit of incessant repetition I ever observed in any person. Within the space of less than half an hour, he told us five or six times over, that he was Secretary to the Municipality of Monasterio adding once (what, to do him justice, he did not repeat), that one small head — his own — contained all the wisdom, learning, and intellect of the whole corporation; that he remembered Lord Wellington, Lord Beresford, and General Doyley, being upon terms of intimate friendship with the latter; that not long ago the ex-King of Bavaria stayed at his house, and gave the postilions much money, &c., &c., with an infinity of other "bald, disjointed chat."

It was a marvel to hear precisely the same sentences come rolling out of his mouth in sonorous Castilian, again and again, with hardly a single variation, so that, in a short time, we could tell exactly what was coming next. This infliction we bore with the patience of despair, but when he insisted on calling Purkiss away from the frying-pan, for the fourth or fifth time, to interpret to us his municipal dignities and

acquaintance with great personages, both regal and military, we really could stand it no longer, and managed to convey to the old gentleman how sensible we felt of his high position and distinguished antecedents, though we by no means desired selfishly to monopolize his society, or to detain him from his family circle at that late hour. He was good-natured enough to act on the hint, and, to our great relief, betook himself to the group assembled round the kitchen fire, where, let us hope, he found more willing audience.

All this time, a crowd surrounded the house-door, and any opportunity of peeping into the den that served us for a sitting-room, was eagerly embraced by the inquiring spirits of the place, a man belonging to the family presiding over the exhibition, and ejecting each spectator in turn from his "quoin of vantage" as soon as he had enjoyed a good stare at the strangers.

Next morning, to our surprise and relief, the old gentleman never showed face. But when the bill was presented, his non-appearance was perfectly accounted for, he being probably aware, from previous acquaintance with Englishmen, that we were hardly likely to submit to the extortion his daughter was meditating,

in her monstrous demand of a gold piece, more than sixteen shillings, for each of our three beds, the servants having had none whatever. Nor was he far wrong in his surmise, as even our veneration for the intimate friend of General Doyley, and Secretary to the Municipality of Monasterio, did not enable us to overcome our repugnance to so preposterous an overcharge, from which we finally struck off one-third, and then parted on the best terms with our host and hostess.

We were now (November 10th), only two days' ride from Seville, and as man and beast began to require a little rest, our arrival there was regarded by the whole party as the *summum bonum* of present existence.

The muleteers, Marcos and Tomas, showed to-day unusual alacrity in getting on, and belaboured their donkeys with an earnestness that was altogether unaccountable, until some one recollected an incident of the preceding night, which seemed to explain this unwonted energy. A very suspicious-looking individual, having his face enveloped in the muffler of his cloak, passed us with the usual salutation of the road, not long before we entered Monasterio. We set him down as a *ratero*, or footpad, the lowest class

of Spanish highwaymen, and he seemed on the look-out for any chance enterprise that might turn up. At that moment our cavalcade was by no means in compact order, we three being considerably ahead, then came Swainson and Elfick, while Purkiss and the muleteers brought up the rear. Of them he requested a light for his cigar, a very common manœuvre with these gentry, as it allows close approach without exciting suspicion, and gives an opportunity of examining at leisure the condition and numbers of a party. This inspection convinced him apparently, that it would be unsafe for him single-handed to attack the three, and he skulked off, leaving a profound impression on the minds of Marcos, and Tomas, of which next day we reaped the benefit.

From Zafra we had been gradually approaching the out-lying ranges of the Sierra Morena, and at Monasterio reached a point, which in Wales would be called "the turning of the waters," the northern streams seeking the Guadiana, while the southern take a contrary direction, and fall into the Guadalquivir. Every now and then we came upon scenes of rare beauty, awakening recollections of many a choice landscape on the canvas of the old masters.

Verdant glades stretched far into the recesses of ilex-woods, where brooks, pure as crystal, glittering in the sunshine, meandered through brakes of luxuriant underwood; while across the overlapping folds of gently-sloping hills, to which distance imparted a tinge of mingled blue and purple, with here and there a naked strip of bright red soil, such tempting views opened to the south, luring us onward to the sparkling clime of Andalusia. Above us gleamed a sky of cloudless azure, and so fervid was the noontide heat, that we gladly availed ourselves of the shade of some wayside trees for a brief protection from its power.

This lovely day closed with a sunset, of which no words of mine can give more than the feeblest description, though it is pleasant to refresh the impressions it has left on the memory. The western sky glowed with

“clouds of all tincture

Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together ”

into a vision of such unearthly loveliness, that as they floated in a dazzling expanse of sapphire and amber, we seemed to be gazing on a sea of glory studded with “the Isles of the Blessed!” Every moment the sky became suffused with

some new marvel of colouring, which, gradually fading away with the declining sun, gave place to an illumination of purest white; while through the east, belted with a zone of fire, like a Queen came forth the moon, pacing up the heavens.

It was not until we had passed Ronquillo, our halting-place the night before entering Seville, that we traversed anything worthy of being dignified with the title of a mountain-pass, and even then it appeared in a very mild form, clothed with dwarf forests of arbutus in flower, and gum-cistus, and directly overlooking the broad plain of the Guadalquivir. During the last few days we had been indulging our imagination with ideal pictures of almost tropical scenery, which Seville was to realize, and had decked out its environs with groves of bananas, palm trees, and other choicest specimens of oriental vegetation. There were to be leagues of orange and citron woods skirting our path on each side as we rode along; while cacti, aloes, and such-like inferior productions, might appropriate whatever space their betters had left unoccupied. We quite revelled by anticipation in the delicious softness of a southern climate.

Never was imagination so unmercifully snubbed by the inexorable reality of facts ! For after descending the slopes of the Sierra Morena we found ourselves in the midst of a most unpoetical landscape of common-place corn-fields, which, unvaried by tree, or hedge, or shrub, stretched out before us apparently to the very gates of the city, dispelling in a moment the fond dreams of beauty which our imagination had conjured up. As for the much-vaunted Guadalquivir, that "ancient river" of Iberian romance, it has here no more character or variety than the most ordinary canal, and its waters, all the time we sojourned on its banks, looked like nothing so much as a mixture of diluted mud, and brickdust.

Altogether our approach to Seville rudely disenchanting us of many a fair vision, and the sallies of Imagination which had caused us this disappointment, received a check that was not soon forgotten ; so that for the future, whenever we drew near any spot of world-wide fame, we allowed her less liberty of outrunning our tardy steps, and investing it with her own bright hues, only to mock us afterwards by the contrast between the actual and the ideal. We still felt, however, as we dismounted at the

Hôtel de Londres, how much cause we had for thankfulness, in having thus accomplished the first portion of our journey with such perfect success, the whole cavalcade, biped and quadruped, arriving safe and sound, somewhat wayworn, it is true, with the many leagues we had travelled, but all the more disposed for thoroughly enjoying the interval of rest we had promised ourselves within the walls of Seville.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ONE of the most interesting contributions to the perfection of modern mapping has been the introduction of those imaginary lines, that indicate the habitat of the various productions of different countries, mineral, botanical, and zoological. One of these lines, not generally recognized by chartographers, we crossed on entering Seville. Our ride through Estremadura had been full of enjoyment, and in those far-reaching solitudes, amid forests of ilex, and aromatic wastes of gum-cistus, we had discovered charms, unknown to the well-beaten paths of ordinary travel, the recollection of which no lapse of time can altogether efface. Yet even here our pleasures were not without alloy;

“Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid.”

It was a drawback moreover, which cannot fail to

come home to the feelings of every true-born Briton—we could get no butter!! From the day we left Madrid, to the hour when we passed under the arch of the Puerta Triana at Seville, our course had lain through a land, where milk is a rarity, and butter exists not. The excellence of the bread in the South of Spain has been celebrated for centuries, and we can conscientiously contribute our crumb of evidence to the general testimony in its favour. But what is even the best bread in the world, *dry*? No wonder then we never fully appreciated its sweetness until we reached Seville, where we crossed the line of demarcation, and re-entered the Regions of Butter! We did not inquire curiously into the origin of that which was set before us, nor ask whether it had been produced on the meadowy banks of the Guadalquivir, or the sunny slopes of the Sierra Morena. Nay, we even preserved a philosophical tranquillity, when some one ruthlessly suggested it might very probably have come from climes beyond the sea, and perhaps commenced its voyage in the famous Cove of Cork. And, sooth to say, it *had* a decided flavour of brine, not to specify other peculiarities, which would hardly qualify it for appearing on an English breakfast-table. But

Estremadura is an admirable Reformatory for fastidiousness of appetite, and we ate our salt and highly-odorous butter, with as keen a zest, as if it had been the primest Dorset, that ever left the dairy-farms of the Vale of Blackmore.

No town in the South of Spain is more visited than Seville. All sorts of people go there, with all sorts of motives. The artist goes to fill his portfolio with the picturesque forms and showy costumes of *Majo*, and *Maja*. The lover of paintings makes a pilgrimage there to see *Murillo* in all his glory. The seasons of the Church, Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter, attract thousands from devotion, or curiosity; the religious ceremonies of the place being, it is said, of peculiar interest, and unrivalled, except at Rome. Some even go to Seville for the sake of the excellent shooting, which abounds almost within sight of its walls. As for ourselves, though we were neither artists, nor professed connoisseurs, neither sportsmen nor devotees, yet doubtless, when the idea of going there first entered our minds, we felt a laudable desire, and formed excellent resolutions, to make the best use of our visit, by seeing all the lions. But, with the changeableness incidental to poor humanity, two of us at least approached the gates in a very altered

mood. The long rides, rough ways, and short-commons of the last three weeks, had considerably blunted the keen edge of our enthusiasm for sight-seeing, and when we found ourselves securely established among the creature-comforts of the *Hôtel de Londres*, our first concern was "to take our ease in our inn," and restore exhausted nature.

This hotel is by far the best we stayed at in any part of Spain. It stands on one side of a new square (formed by the removal of a convent), *La Plaza Nueva*, which, from its extent and openness, may be called the lungs of Seville. The only defect in the appointments of the hotel seems almost to belong to the climate, and would have passed unnoticed at another season—the doors and windows were more ready to open, than to shut, and after the sunny skies, and pleasant warmth of the last three weeks, we found Seville almost as rainy and cold as Madrid, with even fewer resources for making such weather bearable. At Madrid grates are not uncommon in sitting-rooms, and though fuel is excessively dear, you have at any rate the option of paying or starving. But at Seville such things seem to be altogether unknown, and we had to sit in great-coats, and other wraps, while the

only object that represented to us the grand central point, around which an Englishman's domestic affections concentrate, was a brazier of live embers, a very indifferent, and costly substitute for a glowing pile of best Wallsend. In fact, almost the only purpose the *brasero* really serves is drying linen, after it comes from the laundress; for in Spain its condition when sent home depends entirely on the state of the weather: if it is dry, your shirts will be dry; if wet, they too will be wet, and it is by no means a pleasant process to dry them on one's person.

We were waited upon by a young Hungarian, for whom, on account of his misfortunes and friendlessness, we soon began to feel a hearty sympathy. His family, which occupied a most respectable position in Hungary, had been "out" in 1848, his father being one of the patriot leaders. At the close of the war they emigrated to the United States, whence on his father's death the young man had returned to Europe, and finding no other way of life open, had engaged himself as waiter to the Hôtel de Londres, his partial knowledge of English being his chief recommendation for the post. I never saw any one more thoroughly to be pitied, not so much because he thought himself utterly

friendless (for he was young, and in time might have made friends), but because he seemed to have no definite religious principles, or anything whereon to stay his desires and hopes. The only feeling that stood firm amid the tumult of his soul was an intention to commit suicide, as the surest refuge from the misery and degradation that surrounded him. Of the sinfulness of self-murder he had not the slightest conception, though he was by no means devoid of religion, without however any power apparently to apply either its obligations, or consolations to his own circumstances. In his present condition he could perceive nothing but intolerable degradation, out of which no possible good could be educed. We used to have long conversations with him, which no doubt relieved his mind for the moment, and he often spoke of our stay at the hotel as the happiest period he had known for a long time; but I fear no permanent effect was produced, by giving his mind a healthier tone, and at last in parting from him, we could not help feeling very painful forebodings respecting his future career.

It has been said, "There is not a more solemn and beautiful temple in the world than the great Cathedral at Seville." We approached it for the first time through the Patio de los

Naranjos, "the Court of Orange-trees," the largest portion remaining of the old Mosque, on the site of which the present building was erected. Such enclosures, shutting out with their high walls the sounds and sights of the outer world, and solemnizing the mind ere the house of God is actually entered, appear to have been usually attached to Moorish places of worship. The original fountain, surrounded by rows of fruit-laden orange-trees, still occupies the centre of the court, and at the north-east corner rises one of the most beautiful towers in Europe, the far-famed Giralda, the landmark and ornament of Seville, and the first object the eye rests on as you traverse the wide plain that encircles the city. As it came forth in the freshness of its original beauty from the hands of Moorish builders, few constructions could have more perfectly united the gracefulness of a minaret with the solid firmness of a tower, its elevation of one hundred and eighty-five feet being relieved throughout by windows of extreme elegance, and enriched with panelling of shallow arcades, and tracery of varied pattern, without sacrificing in any degree the impression of strength and solidity. But, in spite of Ford's encomium, I cannot admire what he calls



THE GIRALDA, SEVILLE.

“the rich filigree-belfry, which, elegant and attractive beyond description, was most happily added in 1568 by Fernando Ruiz.” In my humble opinion, “this happy addition” simply spoils the rest of the tower.

It is time, however, to enter the Cathedral. Passing through a narrow corridor terminated by an old horse-shoe arch, you emerge into the solemn gloom that veils the interior of the grandest ecclesiastical building in Spain. The effect is overwhelming. The sudden transition from the bright sunshine of the outer air produces a sensation of darkness; all is confused and indistinct, while the eye, instinctively seeking relief, looks upward to the clerestory, where, through windows few and small, a feeble ray of daylight comes struggling in. By degrees the magnificent proportions of the building reveal themselves, and in the awe-struck sense of majesty and grandeur, which almost oppresses the mind, you unconsciously acknowledge the supremacy of Pointed Architecture. Till I stood within the Cathedral at Seville, I had considered the Duomo at Milan internally the most awe-inspiring building I ever saw. But though it is hardly fair to place the impressions of yesterday side by side with those whose freshness has been

effaced by the lapse of years, there can be little doubt that the interior grandeur, and solemnity of this church is not approached by its Italian rival, to which it has so frequently been compared. Each is justly condemned on account of its departure from the strict principles of the style, to which it professedly belongs. Yet even Fergusson allows Seville Cathedral to be "so grand, so spacious, and so richly furnished, that it is almost impossible to criticize, when the result is so splendid and imposing." In fact, our English cathedrals, with all their strict adherence to the principles of true Gothic, do not by any means so thoroughly realize the idea of temples dedicated to the service of the Most High, from having been stripped of so many accessories indispensable to the full development of Pointed Architecture, such as painted glass, sculpture, wood-carving, embroidery, mural decoration, metal-work, and other branches of Ecclesiastical Art. Without these (at least in some measure), the noblest building will present a bald, cheerless aspect, provocative of neither reverence, nor devotional feeling; while, on the contrary, so powerfully do the varied creations of Art affect the mind, that as soon as you enter the Cathedral at Seville, where (apart from

Romish peculiarities, indicative equally of bad taste and unsound theology,) everything the eye rests upon harmonizes with the great purpose of the building, its religious spirit at once takes possession of the soul, and with the Patriarch of old, you feel, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, this is the Gate of Heaven!"

Every department of Art has contributed to the decoration of this Cathedral. Murillo, and his enemy, Juan Valdes Leal, Morales, Zurbaran, Roelas, and Vargas painted for it; Montañes, the Phidias of Seville, and Alonzo Cano, his greatest pupil, enriched it with their sculptures, while its painted glass, though by no means of the best date, is yet gorgeous in colouring, and highly effective. It abounds in superb Retablos (one of which, above the high altar, would, of itself, make any other cathedral famous), magnificent tombs, church-plate of untold value, some of it the production of Juan d'Arfe, the Cellini of Spain, and last but not least, iron-work of exquisite design and execution, a species of church ornamentation, in which Spain seems to excel all the rest of Christendom. In fact, you are reminded at every turn of Fergusson's remark, that at the very

period when the Reformation had brought both the building and decoration of churches to a complete stand-still throughout every other portion of Europe, at that moment an increased stimulus was given to Ecclesiastical Art in Spain. "Here the old faith was never shaken. The country had lately become, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, for the first time, a united monarchy. In their reign the discovery of Columbus had opened to Spain a new world and the most brilliant prospects. The final expulsion of the Moors had thrown into the hands of the Church unbounded wealth and power, and at the same time inspired it with the zeal, which has ever prompted the expenditure of such wealth on monuments for public use, before it became absorbed in individual selfishness. All these causes made this the great cathedral-building age of Spain."

CHAPTER XXX.

NEARLY every morning during our ten days' stay at the Hôtel de Londres, we used to hear from about nine to twelve, in the rooms overhead, the various sounds, vocal and instrumental, that accompany a regular "practice," and occasionally a similar exercise was repeated in the evening. The softer and sweeter notes being unable to penetrate the intervening floor, what we generally caught were decidedly *altissimi*; so that while we could not but admire the energy and diligence of the performers, our love of music was more tantalized than gratified. On asking the waiter the meaning of these *matinées musicales*, he told us, that the *prima donna* of the Seville opera, an Englishwoman, occupied an apartment above us; and soon after, a young Englishman staying in the Hotel, whose acquaintance we had made at Madrid, gave us so favourable an account of the lady, and said so

much about the indifferent reception she had met with at Seville (England and the English being at present in the lowest depths of Spanish unpopularity), that we determined patriotically to go to the theatre, by way of expressing our sympathy for our countrywoman. We were unlucky in the opera, the “*Trovatore*,” nor was the performance that night, we were told, an average one; but after making all fair allowances, it is impossible to imagine anything more dead-alive, and insensible than the whole audience, boxes, pit, and gallery. I heartily pitied any one condemned to sing to such an assemblage of stocks and stones.

Most people picture the Southern Spaniard as a gay animated creature, breathing an atmosphere of poetry, and sentiment; to whom music and singing are an element of existence necessary as vital air. The peasantry exhibit, no doubt, many indications of such a temperament; but anything more dull and unimpassioned than the upper classes cannot be conceived; and from my observation no community, which goes to the expense of maintaining an opera company every winter, can have less “music in its soul,” than the citizens of Seville, who give one more the idea of a colony of Dutchmen transplanted to

the banks of the Guadalquivir, than the children of fiery Andalusia. Indeed, in walking through the streets no one can fail to notice the wooden, expressionless character of nearly every face, each having precisely the same physiognomy, complexion, features, and lack of animation as its neighbour. And as I am inditing veritable facts, not making up pretty pictures, I am obliged with extreme pain to state, that even the womankind of Seville, despite the fictions of poet and painter, presented to my eyes (which, I must own, are but dim-sighted) the same uninteresting uniformity. What others have seen let them describe; but for my own part, I can only say that the ladies of Seville, as I saw them, have none of that supereminent attractiveness so often imputed to them by travellers. There seems no variety of feature and expression, and Donna Sabina, who is at this moment crossing the *Plaza*, is an exact duplicate in dress and general appearance of Dolores standing on a balcony opposite; both of them being mere reproductions of Donna Carmen, whom we met an hour ago driving near the Cathedral. This is all the more remarkable, because the costume is so picturesque, and the almost universal black tells immensely in favour of the wearers, imparting

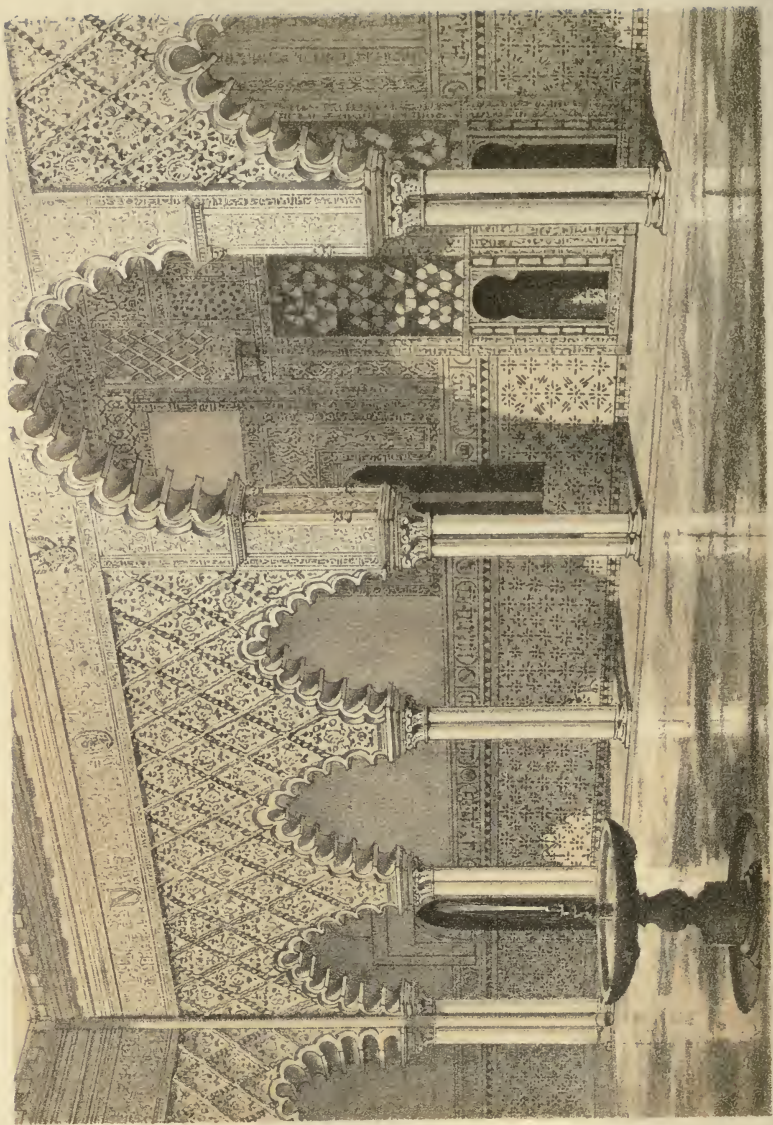
to all a refinement, of which coloured dresses would deprive the great majority. The Spanish ladies certainly excel in eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows, and when you add magnificent hair, glossy as a raven's wing, and then display its bright luxuriance without bonnet, or any save the lightest head-dress, you have in most instances enumerated the principal attractions of Spanish beauty.

The *lacquais de place*, a being seldom found in Spanish towns, flourishes in Seville. Ford mentions the names of several. We found Joseph Serfaty, a compound of Spaniard and Irishman, very civil and obliging. His English, however, is so peculiar, both in phraseology and pronunciation, that sometimes it was a severe trial to keep one's countenance. From internal evidence, I should say he must have been the author of the following advertisement, spelling inclusive, which I met with one day:—

“HOTEL DE L'EUROPE.

“CALLE DE LAS SIERPES, SEVILLE.

“This splendid establishment, that has been *troughout* repaired, and many improvements introduced, is *offerd* to the public in general, it



being considered one of the best in Spain; its situation is central, and *near* all the public *Lyons* and Promenades. The most distinguished visitors have favoured it with *there* patronage."

Of course we went to see the celebrated Alcazar, which stands not far from the Cathedral, withdrawn from the busy haunts of men into a sequestered space, which, including gardens, &c., &c., covers a considerable extent of ground. Authorities on Moorish architecture inform us that it is very questionable how much of the present building is the work of the Moors, so many are the alterations and additions introduced into the original design by successive possessors. Several parts, indeed, are known to have been built by Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V., and others, each imitating, however, more or less successfully, the various characteristics of the Moorish style. Without attempting to describe the different portions of the palace, or to analyze what is old and what of later introduction, I will only say that the general effect is quite enchanting. We passed through about twenty rooms, each more lovely than its neighbour, where the fancy and inventiveness of Oriental Art has expressed itself in every form

of grace and beauty ; and when the charms of colour are superadded, in hues—sometimes rich, sometimes of a more delicate tone—a pale, cold green here, with there a scarlet or crimson of dazzling brilliancy, succeeded by blue of deepest ultramarine, or softened down by a mellow brown—while an exquisite taste and refinement tempers the whole into faultless harmony, an effect is produced on which the eye dwells with ever-increasing pleasure. Marvellous indeed (thought we, as we gazed on this triumph of colouring) must be the beauty of the Alhambra, if it exceed the glories of the Alcazar !

The loveliness of the place, however, has not exempted it from witnessing scenes of horror, one of the most revolting having been the murder, by order of Pedro the Cruel, of his half-brother, Don Fadrique, Master of the Order of Santiago, which, according to the description of the old Spanish ballad, was attended with circumstances of peculiar atrocity.

Nothing can be more attractive than the views from several of the rooms over the gardens, laid out by Charles V. in the *cinque-cento* style, with fish-tanks and fountains, alcoves and sunny terraces. This was by far the prettiest spot we saw in Seville ; and in spring, when the

borders, it is to be hoped, are put into trim order, and the walks weeded, a more delicious retreat cannot be conceived. I must not forget to add that restorations, in excellent taste, have been commenced in some portions of the Alcazar, and in others completed.

We could not help remarking how few worshippers were generally to be seen in the Cathedral, even the women, who, in most Roman Catholic countries, are so regular in their devotions, attending the services in comparatively small numbers. Nor was their behaviour always reverent, it being by no means uncommon to see a female, on her knees, holding quite a lengthened conversation with some chance bystander. But, on one occasion, we saw the whole of the vast interior filled to overflowing.

On Sunday, November 20, a grand *funcion* in honour of the Virgin took place, to implore her blessing on the war with Morocco, which, at that moment, seemed to be the sole subject of thought and conversation, from one end of Spain to the other. The principal feature in the ceremony was a multitudinous procession of laity and clergy, carrying an image of the Virgin through the Cathedral and its precincts,

in the midst of *kneeling* thousands. We had gone for the purpose of seeing the sight, without being at all aware of the nature of the procession; but when we discovered that all persons present would be expected to *kneel* while the image passed by, we went away, and did not, as the French would say, *assist* at the ceremony. If it be not idolatry to perform to an image such an act of devotion as *kneeling*, which thousands of Protestants will not do (at least in their public worship), even to the One True God, it is difficult to understand what is to be considered a breach of the second commandment.

But though we could not remain in the Cathedral, we still enjoyed the sight of the vast crowd, which all Seville and its neighbourhood was pouring forth, in confluent streams, towards the grand centre of attraction; and the myriads of women, clothed in the ever-graceful *mantilla* and *basquiña*, formed a perpetually-changing picture of national physiognomy and costume, which we thought ourselves most fortunate in witnessing.

Seville is to receive the prisoners *that are to be taken* in the impending war with Morocco, an arrangement exhibiting a daring obliviousness of Mrs. Glasse's immortal recipe, though it is not without its parallel in the history of other

nations. In England there is a disposition to regard this war in a ludicrous aspect—as a childish playing at soldiers; whereas to persons on the spot it would appear to be the expression of a strong national feeling, which, at the present moment, fills every Spaniard's mind with a combined impulse of patriotic and religious enthusiasm, prompting them, now that they can afford the expense of a war, to show forth in the sight of Christendom that they are the non-degenerate descendants of those men who drove the Moslem out of Europe, and were the foremost soldiers of their time. In fact, the whole nation, which has ever been prone to dream grandly, fancies itself to be undertaking a new Crusade; is ready to make great sacrifices for its furtherance; and, with a second Isabella on the throne, aspires to repeat the conquest of Granada on African soil. Nor can one contemplate without respect and sympathy the spectacle of a nation like Spain, striving, after centuries of decay, to reinstate itself in the estimation of mankind by recovering its former renown; and they are disposed to be very angry with England at the present moment, because, in our endeavours to prevent this war, they can see nothing but a desire to shut them out of the only field of foreign con-

quest that has been open to them for generations.

A latent feeling seems always to reside in a Spaniard's mind, that foreigners look down on their nation and country; hence arise apparently both their shyness and their habit of boasting, the latter being perhaps nothing more (in intention, at least), than self-assertion carried to an undue extent, by way of doing themselves the justice which is denied them by others. In this they greatly resemble the Welsh. Their shyness is very remarkable. We used to notice that a Spaniard hardly ever stares at a stranger, unless he can do so unobserved; and if discovered, will avert his face, as if detected in some guilty action. It is this national shyness which makes them so stiff and abrupt in their manner; but, as soon as they are treated *as gentlemen* (which all, down to muleteers and peasants, consider themselves), their stiffness at once vanishes, and their manner becomes cordial and attractive.

Englishmen who know the country intimately, speak in the highest terms of the lower classes, and the rural population generally, and it is a circumstance greatly to their credit, that, in all our wanderings through town and country,

along the highways and byways of the land, from Bayonne to Gibraltar, we never saw more than four men who were in the least intoxicated. If they would only leave off those two national sins—bad language, and misuse of the knife—they would be some of the finest peasantry in the world.

Seville, the birth-place of Murillo, is said to possess some of his best paintings, and an entire saloon at the Merced, the Museo of the town, is monopolized by his works. But none of them gave me half the pleasure I enjoyed in looking at the “*Concepcion*,” and other pictures by him in the Madrid Museo, and altogether I was grievously disappointed with the Seville collection. Whether it was the slovenly, neglected air of the desecrated church, which forms the principal portion of the Museo, or the height at which the pictures are hung under a dim light, or whether the fault was in myself, the result was equally unsatisfactory. I derived little enjoyment from my visit to the Merced, and there being some difficulty in getting admittance, so unlike the facility with which you can at all times enter the noble Museo at Madrid, I never went there again.

Two private collections, however, afforded us

a great treat; one at the palace of the Duc de Montpensier, and another at the house of a gentleman in the town. The former contains four magnificent Zurburans, bought in England when Louis Philippe's gallery was sold in 1848, during that terrible season of commercial distress which rendered the purchase of first-class paintings a luxury few could indulge in. There were several fine specimens of other masters, which we longed to see more at leisure; but the attendance of a footman, however civil and obliging, is fatal to the full enjoyment of pictures.

The other collection, though compressed into a small room, contains, in my poor judgment, some gems of exquisite beauty. A St. Francis by Murillo comes first. The holy man on his knees receives into his arms the infant Saviour, his countenance lighted up with such a mingled expression of love and devotion, reverence and tenderness, that he seems no longer to belong to earth, but to be absorbed in the raptures of some ecstatic vision. A St. Sebastian by Francia, struck me as one of the most charming paintings I ever saw. Such a sweet, heavenly countenance, from which every trace of physical suffering had been cast out by an expression of the most perfect patience and resignation, while

such wonderment as may sometimes be observed in the face of a good child, seemed to inquire in mute astonishment how any one could find pleasure in the infliction of pain! It was a picture to be gazed at for hours. Nor must I forget a Holy Family, attributed to Perugino, with one of those unearthly backgrounds he took so much pleasure in painting.

At the Caridad, a kind of alms-house on a large scale, I was greatly struck with a picture of Juan Valdes Leal, the enemy and rival of Murillo. It represents a bishop in his coffin, with owls and "the creeping things man inherits after death," around him in the dark vault, while above, the heavens are opened and a pierced Hand comes forth holding a pair of scales, one of them containing emblems of earthly pleasure, the other a cross, and a heart burning with Divine love. The balance is perfectly *even*, suggesting, as it seemed to me, a much finer moral than if the world had been made to preponderate, and teaching that in the ministers of Christ there must be far more than respectable blamelessness—entire devotion, and surrender of the whole heart. It was altogether a fearful illustration of our Lord's words (Revelation, iii. 15), "I know thy works, that thou

art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

The houses at Seville are proverbially picturesque, and, though we did not see them at the right season for appreciating the full extent of their attractions, yet even in November we could not fail to admire the skill with which the requirements of a southern climate are converted into elements of beauty. Moorish architecture seems to possess this quality in common with Gothic, that while nothing is introduced merely for the sake of ornament, essential features are so treated as to become in the highest degree ornamental. Passing through a kind of porch terminated by a gate of open iron-work, which is often of extreme elegance, you enter the *patio*, a central court, occupying very much the same position in the ground-plan of the Moorish houses, as the great hall used to hold in the mansions of the Middle Ages, and determining the size and general arrangements of the building. Along each of the four sides of the patio runs a row of columns supporting a gallery, into which the rooms on the first floor open; from the centre of the marble floor rises a fountain of the same material, emitting a ceaseless flow of purest water, that soothes the ear with its gentle

lulling sound, while flower-stands and vases of violets, myrtle and orange-trees, fill the air with delicious fragrance. Covered with an awning, which is not removed till sunset, the patio is the general living-room of the family for more than half the year; and on summer evenings many a group that would tell with excellent effect in the artist's sketch-book, may be observed in these apartments through the iron *cancel* opening to the street.

The most elaborate specimen of domestic architecture we saw is the *Casa de Pilatos*, so called from being built, it is said, in imitation of Pontius Pilate's house at Jerusalem, by one of the greatest nobles of the day, F  drique Enriquez de Ribera, in 1533, to commemorate his pilgrimage to the Holy City. The style is a compound of Moorish and Gothic, and in spite of the liberties taken with architectural propriety, the result is extremely pleasing. It is the very house for summer. The grand staircase is a superb display of gilding, colour, and marble; but its glassy polish renders it the most uncomfortable mode of going up and down stairs it was ever my lot to meet with, and a fall on such a surface would be a certain introduction to the tender mercies of a Spanish bone-setter.

The use of coloured tiles for skirting and even panelling rooms, is a striking feature in Spanish houses, that might be transplanted with benefit into other lands. It is of Moorish introduction, and is admirably adapted both for ornament and cleanliness. By means of it, a surface of bright colour takes the place of a blank wall, giving room for a great variety of ornamental patterns; there is no difficulty in keeping it clean, it has always a fresh, cool look, which in a warm climate is an especial recommendation, and above all, it does not harbour *petites bêtes*.

Lord Portarlington wished to play on one of the great organs, feeling sure that instruments so celebrated must be capable of emitting something better than the coarse metallic sounds with which the services of Seville Cathedral are usually accompanied. Noise there is in abundance, but melody and devotional feeling are wanting altogether; nothing, in fact, to indicate a fine instrument, or superior playing. The English Consul, Don Manuel Williams, who with every kindness and attention did his best to make our visit agreeable, undertook to obtain the necessary permission; and, finding that the regular way of proceeding would involve, among

other characteristics of the Circumlocution Office, a petition to the Dean and Chapter, to which a reply could hardly be expected for about a fortnight after our departure from Seville, made a private application to some of the Canons. One of them, Don Calamarde, was utterly scandalized at the idea of the great organ of Seville being profaned by heretical manipulation, and would have given a decided refusal; another, having a little more good-nature, did not absolutely say "No," but begged the performance might be as brief as possible, fearing, no doubt, the orthodoxy of the instrument would be compromised.

An appointment having been made with the head-blower, who, with more liberality of mind than his superiors, did all he could to further the scheme, we went one day to the Cathedral after morning service, and in a few minutes had the satisfaction of hearing very different playing from any we had heard there before, while the blower was charmed to listen to something better than the harsh sounds which usually fell on his ears. Just, however, as the organ had come under perfect control, and a rich stream of melody poured forth through the long-drawn aisles and lofty vaulting of that glorious temple, our enjoyment came suddenly

to an end. A meeting of the Cathedral Clergy, of which we were not aware, happened at that moment to be going on in the Chapter House. On hearing the organ in full career, the Archbishop, who presided, having probably been told nothing of the *quasi*-permission that had been obtained, despatched a message to the blower, commanding him instantly to stop the instrument; and by the time he had descended from the loft, here came our old enemy Calamarde and gave him such a tremendous scolding (which was evidently intended to glance off, right and left, on us), that the poor man vowed he would resign his situation, the emoluments of which are very trifling. We were very much vexed, both on his account and on that of the Consul, whose gentle nature would feel such rude treatment, and whose faithful attachment to the Spanish Communion might have secured him, without any difficulty, the grant of so trifling a favour. Let us hope such incivility is peculiar to Seville. A fortnight later at Granada, an ordinary *commissionnaire* obtained, for the mere asking, such a permission as was denied to the British Consul at Seville!

In my visits to the Seville Post-office, I used to be much struck with one of the arrangements

of the place, peculiarly convenient to strangers, at the same time that it proves the limited correspondence of the country. Every day, as soon as possible after the arrival of the mails, two lists are prepared, one containing the name of every native, and the other of every foreigner, for whom there are letters. These lists are hung up in the vestibule of the Post-office, remaining there a month; and the Spanish hand being generally an admirable specimen of calligraphy, they are as legible as print. Such an arrangement, though utterly impracticable in England, entirely prevents the mislaying and detention of letters so common in foreign post-offices.

One afternoon, we made an excursion to Alcalá de Guadaira, a small town two leagues from Seville. There are as many Alcalás in Spain, as Stokes and Whitchurches in England, each having some suffix to distinguish it from the rest. This takes its name from the river, which, girdling it on two sides, creates a verdant belt of gardens and orchards, in the midst of an arid plain. In summer it must be a delicious spot with its narrow strip of luxuriant vegetation by the water-side, a little Goshen of fruit and flowers, while the greenish-hued stream falls

with a pleasant sound over the weir of a picturesque old mill, that has ground wheat since the time of the Moors.

It was anything but summer weather when we were there; heavy rain, with a regular gale from the South-West. We scrambled through the remains of the old Castle, in no small peril of being carried away bodily. It is said to be one of the finest Moorish fortresses formed of *tapia* still existing in Spain; and coming from a country where cob-walls are general, I took particular notice of its construction. *Tapia* is a *spécialité* of Ford's, and from his account it must be a far more elaborate composition than the cob-walls of England and France. When a wall is to be built, a framework of wood, fastened by movable bolts, and shaped according to the size of the intended construction, is laid on the proposed spot, and having been filled with a mixture of earth, mortar, and pebbles, sufficiently moistened to bind, the composition is then rammed together till it becomes a firm coherent mass, the bolts are withdrawn, the frame moved further on, and the same process is repeated, till the whole building is completed. When thoroughly dried and seasoned, it is said to be indestructible, not requiring a coat of

plaster, as with us, to keep out the weather. I should, however, entirely doubt its power of resisting artillery. I observed no trace of straw, so much used in English cob-walls. One side of the platform on which the Castle stands is occupied by a colony of gipsies, who, as the Kenites of old, have made their nest in the rock. These burrows look by no means uncomfortable, and are, like their occupants, highly picturesque.

Alcalá is celebrated for its bread and its water. Its fifty ovens supply Seville with the best bread in Spain, and Serfaty quite insisted on our carrying off several loaves, as an act of homage to the *genius loci*. They were beautifully white and light, but too close-grained and firm for English tastes, requiring a large accompaniment of butter. This is the prettiest drive in the neighbourhood of Seville, and as there is a very neat posada, it would be a pleasant episode to go and spend a couple of nights under the shadow of the old Moorish Castle on the banks of the Guadaira.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HAVING spent ten days at Seville, we felt anxious to be once more on the road, and after a multiplicity of business in settling accounts, paying bills, and laying in a fresh store of provisions, we left by rail for Cordova on Monday afternoon, November 21st. The engagement with Marcos and Tomas, the muleteers from Toledo, having expired at Seville, was now renewed, and extended to Gibraltar. Originally they had agreed to go with us only from Toledo to Talavera, a journey of two days; but they behaved so well, and seemed so thoroughly to enjoy the expedition, that it became a mutual convenience to travel together all the way to Seville. They were most good-humoured, honest fellows, sober, and singularly free from the common vice of the Spanish peasant—bad language,—and very considerate to their beasts. Marcos was a grotesque compound, having the figure of Sancho Panza

with the countenance of a Chinaman; and as he trudged along in sandalled shoon, greasy trousers, and battered wide-awake, with an ash-plant thrust up the back of his round jacket, and depending like a tail from his waist, he presented an utter contrast to the popular notion of a Spanish muleteer. In truth, with all his good qualities, he was decidedly the untidiest specimen of his class we ever met with, and we used to feel occasionally, that he somewhat compromised our respectability. Tomas, with a more polished exterior, was not by any means so useful and serviceable on the journey as his wealthier partner, being too fond of taking his ease, and sparing himself trouble, and while Marcos would walk on cheerfully "from morn till dewy eve," with now and then a lift on one of his donkeys, the other rode most of the distance between Toledo and Gibraltar.

We could not converse much with them, but through the medium of Purkiss every now and then a joke passed between us, to which they always gave a hospitable reception, a very slender amount of wit being quite sufficient to produce peals of laughter. Their ideas of geography must have expanded largely during the last five weeks, and they have probably ac-

quired juster notions of the size of the globe, than they ever possessed before. Like ourselves, they thoroughly enjoyed the repose of Seville, and, a few days before us, started in great force, taking the high-road to Cordova, there to await our arrival by rail.

Nothing could be more unpromising than the weather. For days it had rained almost incessantly, and we drove from the Cordova station in the midst of a downpour, to be turned out of the fly some two hundred yards from the hotel, which, from the narrowness of the street, is unapproachable in a carriage. We had, in consequence, to undergo "a trial by water," and while making our way there through a labyrinth of alleys, the eaves on each side discharged their twin-torrents on our unlucky heads with overpowering violence.

Having entered Cordova in darkness and rain, we were naturally very eager next morning to catch a glimpse of a place so interesting and famous, which is said in the tenth century to have contained nearly a million of inhabitants, three hundred mosques, and nine hundred baths. The hotel, though dismal-looking to a degree, and anything but clean in some of its arrangements, is centrally placed

on high ground, and on one side commands an extensive view, the distant mountains beyond the Guadalquivir, and the densely-packed area of the town, forming quite a panorama, in pleasing contrast to the flat plains around Seville. The air too, here, has far more elasticity and freshness, nor did we suffer so much from mosquitos, which during our stay at Seville had, in spite of the cold, plagued us day and night.

The principal "lion" of Cordova is the *Mezquita*, or Mosque, which, built in the eighth century by the Caliph Abd el Rahman and his son, for Mahometan worship, was converted, on the capture of the town by Ferdinand III. in 1235, into a cathedral. Its reputation for sanctity was inferior only to that of the sacred tower Kaabah at Mecca, while it claimed an equality with the celebrated El Aksah at Jerusalem. Thousands of pilgrims used to go there annually, a circumstance that will account for a good many of the six hundred inns the town is said to have contained in Moorish times. Fergusson speaks of it as the most interesting building in the whole of Spain, architecturally considered, being the first of any importance undertaken by the Moors, and having been enlarged and ornamented by successive Caliphs,

it exhibits specimens of the various styles adopted in Spain from the earliest ages, until the erection of the Alhambra, during the decline of Moorish Art.

Surrounded by massive walls of considerable height, it presents externally no striking feature, except a tower, which has shared a far worse fate than the Giralda at Seville, having been recased throughout in 1593, an operation that would make it impossible for its original builder to recognize his own workmanship. Its situation, as we approached it, is very inferior to that of Seville Cathedral, which stands out so boldly on its platform of granite. Here too, the principal entrance lies through a Court of Oranges, which, however, is far finer than its namesake at Seville, the dimensions being larger, the cloisters more distinct and spacious, and wearing altogether much more the sequestered air of a religious retreat. The area of the court is filled with fruit-laden orange-trees, the most antique and venerable I ever remember to have seen; and their number, size, and position, so near a place of worship, quite recall the groves of idol-worship among the Jews. Between their stems you catch a glimpse of a marble fountain in ceaseless flow. In summer this





MEZQUITA, CORDOVA .

must be a delicious spot, a place to walk and sit in for hours; but on the day we first visited it, a considerable effort of imagination was required to realize such a season; for the recent rains had carpeted the court with greenish slime, and the air was loaded with chilling damp that forbade us to linger; while the tribe of mendicants, which are ever lying in wait at church-doors, were here more than usually importunate and cross, as if, poor creatures! they were pinched by the untowardness of the weather.

The interior of the *Mezquita* disappointed me grievously, the bare whitewashed walls, and low roof, hardly thirty feet high, producing none of those solemn impressions which may be called the attributes of a cathedral; while the eye is distracted by a forest of short columns extending in all directions, which look as if they had dropped from the clouds, without arrangement, or subordination of parts to any principal object. As may easily be believed; such a building fails to kindle the least spark of awe, or devotional feeling. It should however be remembered, that the Cathedral authorities have interfered with the original design, by introducing, in the sixteenth century, a double choir of a totally different style, which, by blocking up a consider-

able portion of the central area, has robbed the building of its principal characteristic—space,—the ground-plan covering, it is said, a larger surface than any church in the world, except St. Peter's. Before this alteration, the interior must have presented a singular appearance, the *coup d'œil* embracing an uninterrupted view of more than 1200 columns, while the lowness of the roof would increase enormously the apparent extent of the area from which they spring. A connoisseur in marbles would find these columns a perfect study, consisting as they do of polished jasper, porphyry, verd-antique, and other choice sorts, some of them unknown to modern lapidaries, all being in single blocks. There are hundreds of verd-antique. Their history must be a curious one, if Ford's account be true, that some of them were brought from France, others from Seville, and Tarragona; while many came from Constantinople and North Africa. Fergusson states they were transported to Cordova, from the Roman remains at Merida, and its neighbourhood. Some idea of the *Mezquita's* size may be suggested by the fact, that it contains fifty-two aisles, of which nineteen run longitudinally, and thirty-three across the building, all having a nearly uniform width of

twenty-two feet, except one near the centre, which is twenty-seven.

Another barbarism of the Cathedral clergy was the removal of the original roof of *alerce* wood, a species of *arbor vitæ*, which was carved and painted with all the skill and taste of Moorish art, and the substitution of the present hideous brick vaulting with its congenial coating of whitewash. After such Vandalism, one cannot but wonder that persons, who went to so much trouble and expense in gratifying their barbarous taste, should ever have permitted such a gem as the Sanctuary to survive their day. According to Fergusson, this was the work of Caliph Hakeem, 695 A.D., and he considers it the most perfect and pure specimen of Moorish architecture in the whole of Spain, pointing out at the same time, that its graceful and flowing forms are infinitely superior to the interlacing straight lines of the Alhambra, while the materials, instead of being mere painted plaster, are real marbles, and true mosaic-work.

He further remarks that the shortness of the marble columns suggested one of the peculiar features of the building, the architect having adopted the expedient of placing arch upon

arch, in order to eke out their height, an idea he may have caught from the frequent use of successive tiers of arches in the construction of Roman aqueducts.

It was quite a relief to turn from blank walls and frowning roof, to the rich colouring, and light, graceful arches of the Sanctuary. Its hues have lost none of their brilliancy, nor has the lapse of time dimmed the golden cells of the exquisite honeycomb roof; and as you stand under its fairy-like dome, you hardly regret the blankness of the general building, setting off as it does, in the highest degree, the mellow beauties of this central shrine.

Most of the Spanish Cathedrals we had already seen were perfect treasuries of Art, combining under one roof such an overwhelming profusion of carving, metal-work, painted glass, sculpture, and pictures, that it is impossible to examine them worthily, without more leisure than tourists can generally command. It was therefore especially provoking that at Cordova, where our detention for four days through bad weather gave us abundance of spare time, the Cathedral is almost devoid of decorative detail, the most conspicuous ornament we saw being a florid display of massive brass railings in the

highest state of polish, connecting the two choirs, which a number of workmen were busily engaged in rubbing with oranges. It was the most tasteless piece of metal-work we saw anywhere in Spain, and though it would probably have delighted the heart of Alexander the coppersmith, and men of his craft, it failed to give us any pleasure, having no more beauty than the balusters of an ordinary staircase!

What a resource should we have found in the great Palace of Zahra, which once existed in the neighbourhood of Cordova, and of which Fergusson transcribes from Arabian historians so remarkable an account:—

“According to these authors, the enclosing wall of the Palace was 4000 feet in length, East and West; 2200 feet North and South. The greater part of this space was occupied by gardens, but these, with their marble fountains, kiosks, and ornaments of various kinds, must have surpassed in beauty, and perhaps even in cost, the more strictly architectural part of the building. 4300 columns of the most precious marbles supported the roofs of the halls; 1013 of these were brought from Africa, 19 from Rome; 140 were presented by the Emperor of Constantinople to Abd el Rahman, the princely

founder of this sumptuous edifice. All the halls were paved with marbles in a thousand varied patterns. The walls, too, were of the same precious material, and ornamented with friezes of the most brilliant colours. The roofs, constructed of cedar, were ornamented with gilding on an azure ground, with damasked work and interlacing designs. All, in short, that the unbounded wealth of the Caliphs at that period could command, was lavished on this favourite retreat; and all that the art of Constantinople and Bagdad could contribute to aid the taste and power of execution of the Spanish Arabs, was enlisted to make it the most perfect work of its age. Did this Palace of Zahra now remain to us, we could afford to despise the Alhambra, and all the works of that declining age of Moorish art.”—Vol. i. p. 456.

Now, alas! not a stone remains upon another to mark the site of so marvellous a construction!

Cordova is a singularly quiet old town, resembling Toledo in the rarity of its carriages, and narrowness of streets, many of them being mere alleys with a watercourse in the centre, into which the deep eaves of the houses on each side discharge, during rain, a stream so copious,

that it requires a very robust umbrella to bear up against it. It used to be celebrated for its leather (hence our legal term, Cordwainer), and silver filigree, both being creations of Moorish skill. No town certainly stands more in need of good leather, were it only to protect the feet of its inhabitants from the vile pavement, but the art has been carried off by the exiled Moors over the sea to Morocco, where it still flourishes; and the only specimens we saw of "Cordovan," were a few pigskins, tanned, for holding wine. Silversmiths, however, still abound at Cordova, and in their shops we spent a good deal of our spare time and money. Spanish filigree, though perhaps hardly equal to the Indian in delicacy and elegance, is much more adapted to the vicissitudes of a traveller's portmanteau, from its remarkable firmness and strength. This is a good place to pick up old jewellery, and both Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes made considerable purchases of ear-rings, lockets, reliquaries, &c., in some of the curiosity-shops.

Our hotel, being constructed for the exclusion of air and light, on account of the intense heats of summer in Andalusia, was wofully dismal, and ill adapted for "the brief November days," which during our visit "fell chill and dun" on

the banks of the Guadalquivir, as ever over northern moorland. We were almost as destitute of resources for passing the time, during our four days' sojourn at Cordova, as Washington Irving in his story of the Stout Gentleman; and when books, letters, and journals had each in turn been exhausted, not a few of our odd moments were employed in watching the clerk of a diligence-office, over the way, with whom, from the narrowness of the street, we might almost have shaken hands, had each party been simultaneously disposed to do so. Morning, noon, and night, there sat he at a desk under the window, writing away with unflagging industry and perseverance. This, in a Spaniard, quite excited our curiosity, and having nothing better to do, we wondered what could be the cause of so remarkable a devotion to business. On the third day our speculations on the subject were happily terminated by the appearance of another actor on the stage, who looked like an Inspector, severe and official, and commenced a grand overhauling of accounts, and examination of ledgers. The result was never communicated to us, so in default of more accurate information, let us hope it was perfectly satisfactory to all parties. At any rate, when I looked

again through the deepening twilight, the writing had ceased, the scribe with his velvet cap and red tassel had disappeared from his accustomed place,

“And left the world to darkness and to me!”

One afternoon the weather cleared up for a few hours, and glad to escape from our prison-house, we walked to the top of one of the hills behind the town, commanding the best view we had yet seen of the surrounding neighbourhood. Behind us rose the lowest range of the Sierra Morena, broken up into green dells and sunny slopes; while here and there, in sheltered nooks of more than ordinary attractiveness, stood hermitages, of which the mountain contains a host. Before us lay Cordova, glittering in almost snowy whiteness, with its broken outline of tower, monastery, and church, while from the centre of the housetops, which, in the South of Spain, form so prominent a feature in town-views, a single palm-tree reared its graceful head. Southward we caught a glimpse of the Guadalquivir, as, brimful with the late floods, it poured its turbid waters under the old Roman bridge. The air had all that lustrous transparency, which precedes, and follows rain, and a fine old castle,

which, at a distance of—I know not how many leagues, crowned a promontory thrown out from the mountain-range into the level expanse of the plain, seemed to have approached within the limits of a moderate walk.

The old bridge and classical gateway possessed a peculiar interest for us, as being the principal objects in a charming painting by Bossuet at Emo Park, which, from its faithfulness of representation, enabled us to recognize them at once as old friends. In our different explorations about the town we had remarked with much pleasure, that several houses of recent erection had been built in the old Moorish style with patio, gallery, and fountain, as it would indeed be difficult to devise an arrangement which would more thoroughly combine so many elements of the picturesque, with the requirements of a southern climate.

Altogether, in spite of bad weather, Cordova struck us as being far more agreeable in point of situation and scenery than Seville. Days could be spent in delightful rambles along the sides of the Sierra Morena among the hermitages and convents with which it is dotted. One of the latter, which came in view as we rode away to Montilla, seemed more like a small town,

than a religious house, so vast was its extent; while its position on a broad upland slope, sheltered by the mountain-crest from the northern blast, was perfection itself for beauty and healthiness; and its occupants, with Cordova at their feet, could still look down on the busy haunts of men, and, though sequestered from the world, were not absolutely shut out of its ken by those depths of solitude, which surround so many religious houses.

Many an anxious look had we been casting daily on the narrow strip of sky visible from our sitting-room, yet little could we see but the tokens of "pitiless, ceaseless, unrelenting rain," which came down with as much energy and steadiness, as if fair weather had departed for ever. Our time meanwhile was shrinking to its shortest span. November was almost at an end; we felt particularly anxious to reach Gibraltar by the 13th of December to catch the Peninsular and Oriental boat for Southampton, and we were no less desirous to have ample leisure for thoroughly seeing the grand culminating point of our journey—Granada. It was not, however, till Thursday, the 24th, that our constant gaze at what sailors call "the wind's

eye," enabled us to detect a kindlier expression, and even then, the indications were by no means hopeful. It may be wondered, why we did not brave the weather, and start in the rain? The reason is a very simple one. In many parts of Andalusia the soil is so tenacious, that after rain it acquires the adhesiveness of birdlime with the heaviness of lead, so that, had we started in bad weather, we should very soon have stuck in the mud, it being an utter impossibility for even horses and mules, much more the donkeys that carried our baggage, to make way through such roads.

November 25th. — Up at daybreak, the weather-tokens having a very promising appearance; packed up and breakfasted in haste, anxious to escape from that house of bondage; and then to our mortification discovered, that Marcos and Tomas would not be forthcoming for a good hour, though they had been strictly charged yesterday to be ready betimes. We had repeatedly remarked, that the more kindly and indulgently they have been treated, the slacker has their service grown. Nothing could exceed their regularity and diligence for the first fortnight. They were always ready in good time,

and packed the different articles of baggage with such care that each kept its place firmly all through the live-long day. In acknowledgment of their conduct we treated them one night to a substantial supper. It was a moment of weakness, and we rued it ever after !

Next day they were behind their time, the luggage was loosely packed, various articles were shed along the road, and more time was consumed in necessary re-adjustment of almost every donkey, than had been similarly expended in the whole course of our previous journey. Heedless of this, which ought to have served us as a warning, so pleased were we with our delightful ride through Estremadura, that on reaching Seville we gave them another entertainment on a much grander scale, which completed the relaxation of discipline, and left us virtually very much at their mercy in such matters as punctuality, for the remainder of the expedition. Indeed we fully proved the truth of Ford's counsel, that Spanish servants should always be kept up to the mark, so as to feel a master's authority ; according to "the Duke's" maxim, that the only way to get them to do anything is "to take a decided line and frighten them."

Seville and Cordova had been Marcos and To-

mas' Capua, and after such a lengthened intermission of travel they seemed so slow in realizing the fact, that we were actually about to resume our journey, that it was nearly ten o'clock before we had fairly quitted the town!

CHAPTER XXXII.

FRIDAY, *November 25th.*—Our satisfaction at escaping from that dreary Hôtel Rizzi at Cordova, and the pleasure of being once more on horseback under one of the loveliest skies I ever beheld, with an atmosphere of lustrous transparency, made to-day's ride peculiarly agreeable; man and beast commencing this second portion of our journey with renovated vigour.

Granada was our destination, and the waters being out in consequence of the late rains, the shortest route through Castro del Rio, and Alcalá la Real, had become for the moment impracticable, so that we were obliged to follow the Camino Real by Fernan Nuñez to Montilla, where we proposed halting for the night. Riding along the Queen's highway was never popular with us; but to-day, so delicious was the freshness of the air, so striking and varied the atmospheric effects, that a country of far less interest,

than this rich and highly-cultivated district, which produces some of the finest wheat in the world, would have assumed at least a transient semblance of beauty. For the first two hours we did not lose sight of Cordova, every turn of the road presenting to us some fresh aspect of the picturesque old city, as it lay slumbering in the sunshine, backed by the bosky dells and sparkling hermitages of the Sierra Morena. Were the broad plain of the Guadalquivir an expanse of sea, the whole scene might have suggested to Guido the landscape of his Aurora.

We read in "Don Quixote," that on the day after his adventure with the windmills, he and Sancho met "two monks of the order of St. Benedict, mounted on dromedaries; for the mules whereon they rode were not much less." Had the worthy knight been in our company this morning, he would have seen a veritable specimen of that quadruped, but without a Benedictine for its rider, the whole race of monks having become, since the suppression of the monasteries, an almost extinct genus throughout the Peninsula. Just as we were crossing the Guadajoz, to our extreme surprise, and to the manifest disgust of horses, mules,

and even donkeys, we suddenly came upon a splendid Bactrian dromedary, which, being led about the country as a show, was now on its way to astonish the juvenile population of Cordova. He looked hardly out of keeping with surrounding objects; so many are the points in common between the South of Spain, and the general character of Oriental scenery.

The olive-harvest was now at its height, and on all sides such merry groups of men, women, and children were stripping the well-laden trees, reminding us by their gaiety of "the joy in harvest," so often alluded to in Scripture. The berries, when fit for gathering, have much the same colour and size as the common damson, with a flavour widely different, being extremely bitter. One of the marked features in Spanish progress during the last twenty years is the increased attention now paid to the cultivation of the olive, and in all directions plantations are being formed on land, that was previously almost unproductive.

About three o'clock we reached Fernan Nuñez, a cleanly, thriving village, with every house numbered after the custom of the country, which according to our observation seems to extend to the smallest hamlet. I first remarked it at

Cuacos. Here we ought to have halted for an hour, to give the horses their usual afternoon feed ; but so anxious were we to make up for the lateness of our start, that we rode on still, the scenery becoming more picturesque at every turn, opening out from time to time into landscapes of exquisite beauty, in which Castro el Rio, an old hill-fort, perched like an eyrie on an isolated crag to our left, occupied a prominent position.

All through this part of Andalusia, castles and towns are similarly situated, memorials of those by-gone ages, when the district formed "the Debatable Land," as a Borderer would express it, between Christian and Infidel. Sometimes two or three such eagles' nests are in sight at once.

Night had fallen long before we rode into Montilla, the birth-place of "the Great Captain," a small country-town famous for its wine, while the neighbourhood, like Palestine of old, abounds "in wheat, and barley, vines and fig-trees, oil-olive and honey." Having found a very homely, but clean-looking posada, close to the town-gate, we were very glad, during the hungry interval that elapsed before supper was ready, to take our place among the group of muleteers, that

hemmed in the fire; the nights having now become quite as cold, though not so damp, as at the same season in England.

Saturday, 26th.—Off betimes for Cabra, a mountain-town at the foot of the Sierra Frailes, getting almost bogged, immediately after leaving Montilla, in a great slough, which threatened to swallow up bodily some of the minor donkeys. Country still very pleasing. Sometimes our road lay through open spaces of heath, and thicket, such as gipsies love to frequent; sometimes beside meadows, where murmuring brooks create a perennial verdure. Further on a snug olive-farm looked out from its sheltering grove upon a broad sweep of undulating corn-land, which the young wheat had clothed with a vesture greener than emerald; while right ahead, with broken wall, and ruined donjon-tower, rose Aguilar, one of those curious old towns beloved by painter, and archæologist, which having once been the stronghold and protection of the neighbourhood, still survives to be its ornament.

The morning was lovely, but we had not ridden far, before unmistakable signs of a change appeared along the bold outline of the Sierra Frailes, over which to our left, lay the road to

Granada. The vapoury mists, that followed last night's frost, were not absorbed insensibly into the air, but after ascending in irregular spiral wreaths, had settled in compact masses upon the mountain-tops, an almost infallible indication that they would descend again in rain, ere another sunrise, as any one who has paid much attention to the weather-tokens of a mountainous country, might easily prognosticate.

We made our mid-day halt on the banks of a small stream, the Cabra, and while the horses drank of the brook, and fed on the barley we had brought with us, the rest of the party (mules and donkeys excepted, which, like Mahometans in Ramadan, never broke their fast from sunrise to sunset), regaled themselves on Montanches' ham, and other items of good cheer.

Our route now struck off from the highway, just where a small town, named, if I remember aright, Monturque, crowns the summit of a green hill, that reminded me of Corfe Castle, and following the windings of a miry lane with ruts of portentous width and unknown depth, we at last emerged upon a terrace-like strip of open ground that overhung the course of the Cabra, and led up through many a tangled thicket and rocky dell, all a-glow with the hues

of autumn, to the principal town of the neighbourhood, which either owes, or gives, its name to the stream, that waters this most romantic mountain glen.

Cabra is approached from the west through a broad avenue of olive-groves, producing a stateliness of effect, I should scarcely have anticipated from a tree, so generally condemned for its commonplace, characterless, appearance. It is a place of considerable antiquity, and as it came in sight, seated on a platform of rock terminated abruptly by a precipitous ravine, with gardens and orchards crowded into every available space, and gleaming with the brightest tints of the Fall, on cherry-tree, mulberry, vine, poplar, and white thorn, while the dark masses of the Sierra Frailes towered behind, and framed-in the picture, we agreed it was one of the most remarkable landscapes we had seen anywhere in Spain, and, though of a totally different description, not unworthy to be the *pendant* of beautiful Placentia.

Here we spent Advent Sunday, November 27th, and while the good people at home were singing the hymn of the season, we had to pass the day, as best we could, in that dreary exile from public worship which is the lot of the

English Churchman all through Spain, with the exception of one or two favoured localities.

An antiquarian might have found food for speculation in the name of our inn, "the Posada of Souls," a strange title to give to a house of public entertainment, as in every other country disembodied spirits are supposed to have nothing to do with such places; unless, indeed, a delicate vein of irony may be detected in the term, implying that a Spanish inn, with its empty larder, is adapted only for the accommodation of such beings as are no longer affected by bodily wants!

In this old-fashioned kingdom, where novelty is deprecated as an evil, and friends part with the benediction, "Vaya, usted, con Dios, y que no haya novedad!"—"Go with God, your grace! and may nothing new happen!"—the innkeeper's sign still attests the connection between the hostel and the Church, so general in the Middle Ages, when pilgrims were the chief travellers, and of which, even in England, we retain a few memorials, such as the "Lamb and Flag," "The Angel," "The Cross Keys," "Mitre," and "Cardinal's Cap." Most of the inns in Spain are named after some saintly person, San Cristobal, San Carlos, Sant Anton, San José, de los Angeles,

de las Animas, and occasionally even the sacred name of our Lord is desecrated to this purpose in the title Jesu Nazareno.

Cabra still exhibits traces of its occupation by the Moors. One of the Churches was originally a Mosque, and its conversion to Christian uses was effected with the same barbarism and want of taste that ruined the *Mezquita* at Cordova. I noticed, also, that several horse-shoe arches, and other features of Moorish architecture could be traced out in the rough masonry of our quaint-looking old posada.

The weather this morning did not belie our prognostications of yesterday. A drizzling rain, beginning at daybreak, continued to fall steadily for hours, and the surrounding mountains wore a pall of immovable mist, imparting to the whole landscape an aspect of melancholy chilliness. It is some satisfaction to an Englishman, under such circumstances, to observe that the sunniest lands wear quite as dismal an appearance in bad weather as our own much-abused climate, while they have none of those fireside comforts that enable us to regard "the storm without" with comparative indifference. Nothing, certainly, could be less cheering than our Sunday at Cabra, and from Purkiss' account

it seemed as if we could hardly assure ourselves lodging for the night, the landlady having what is called "a temper of her own," the effects of which, however, were liberally imparted to all within her sphere, combined with an extra amount of Spanish independence. Altogether Purkiss, being not only interpreter, but cook and general purveyor to our party, found very "hard lines" in the kitchen, and had to exercise no small amount of diplomacy to get on with his various avocations, more especially while using the fire, without coming to an open rupture with the worthy dame, and receiving his *congé* before Monday morning.

On the whole we came to the conclusion that Cabra, despite its lovely situation, is hardly the spot where we should choose to spend all the days of our life. The natives appeared to be more uncouth and disagreeable than any community we had yet fallen in with, either in town or country; and we could not stir out of doors without being dogged by a following of dirty boys, who, though bred among these unsophisticated mountains, were not a whit inferior in audacity and general impertinence to the veriest *gamins* of Paris or London. Nor did we find better manners indoors, for Mr.

Sykes having given a *peseta* to one of the landlady's grandchildren, the mother, who happened to be standing by, instead of making some acknowledgment, immediately brought forward two others of her offspring as claimants more than expectants, of a similar gift. Precisely the same incident happened to me a week later, while rambling among the nooks and corners of the Alhambra, the only difference being that, while Mr. Sykes bestowed his *largesse* in silver, mine took the form of economical "coppers." One can hardly wonder, after such instances of effrontery, at the pertinacity of professional mendicants in Spain. They do not beg, but demand; their usual mood being, not, as in other countries, optative, but imperative, and if they find you do not pay them the consideration they conceive themselves entitled to, they do not hesitate to pluck your coat, or even to poke you in the ribs!

We observed here the same desecration of the Lord's day so noticeable all along our route. At Cuacos, on inquiring whether any game could be purchased in the village, we were told there was every prospect of a plentiful supply, as the next day was Sunday! And so it came to pass. For the schoolmaster, whom I chanced

to meet about ten A.M. in full shooting costume, brought home on Sunday evening a well-filled bag, the greater part of which, in the shape of a brace of hares and sundry partridges, Purkiss purchased on reasonable terms.

Fancy the horror of any of us "country parsons" in England, were he to meet his parish schoolmaster setting off some fine Sunday morning on a shooting expedition! It is, however, only fair to add, that apart from the question of "Sports and Pastimes" on the Lord's day, to which we English feel a very legitimate dislike, such Roman Catholics as go to church at all, (a minority, it is to be feared, in Spain,) have generally attended as many services by ten or eleven o'clock as most Protestants do during the whole day.

At Merida, again, where we spent the following Sunday, ploughing, wheat-sowing, and all kinds of farming-work proceeded with just as much activity as during the remainder of the week, and so to-day at Cabra, a large portion of the population was busily engaged in gathering the crop of olives.

Hair-cleaning appears to be a favourite Sunday occupation in all parts of the country, and it is one of the commonest occurrences in

walking through the streets to see groups of women (it being wholly a feminine practice), operating on each other's heads with most praiseworthy diligence, and a gravity of countenance we were never able to imitate.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ride over the mountains from Cabra to Priego is one of extreme beauty, with variety enough to satisfy the most exacting taste. Passing the Alameda, which in early summer must be a little Paradise, vocal with the song of nightingales, and the unceasing voice of water, murmuring on all sides through orchard, and garden, we picked our way along deep-banked lanes of chalky mire, which, ascending continually, landed us at last on a stony plateau of considerable elevation, wild, and stern as the summit of an Alpine pass.

The masses of cold grey rock, streaked with many a patch of weather-beaten lichen, that cropped out on every side, presented a most effective contrast to the glowing sweep of autumnal tints, stretching before us for miles, and marking the curves of the glen we had threaded on Saturday, as we turned round to

take a parting glance at the teeming belt of vineyard, garden, and olive-ground, which makes Cabra proverbial for fertility. How a painter would have revelled in that wondrous profusion of colour! Candour, however, obliges me to add, that having at all times an eye to business, we were suddenly recalled from the contemplation of the landscape by the sight of a woman riding to market, with a fine young hare dangling from her saddle, which at the price of a *peseta*, tenpence English, immediately changed owners.

All through the country we remarked a most intimate connection between beauty of scenery, and badness of roads. Seldom did we enjoy any uncommon amount of the picturesque without such an accompaniment, the portion of bad road we had most recently travelled being always voted the very worst we had ever fallen in with, anywhere. Our ride to-day formed no exception to this rule, and slowly toiling down the mountain-side, we made experiment of every peril that can jeopardize either the knees of a horse, or the neck of its rider. Stones of all shapes and sizes, from a door-step to a boulder, shelving banks of rotten earth, gnarled roots of ilex and chestnut (not to mention the deep holes of the narrow mule-track, which on rocky ground like

this are especially dangerous to the wider-hoofed horse), lay in turn along our path, as we descended into a hill-encircled basin, where turkeys and pigs were feeding under groups of venerable trees. It was one of those rare scenes of sylvan beauty, once so common in England, which scarcely exist now-a-days, except in the pages of "Ivanhoe." But for the greater height and steepness of the hills, I might almost have fancied we were riding through the glades of Bradgate Park. As the fern-clad slopes opened out more and more into the vale country, some new object of interest continually came into view—distant mountain, Moorish castle, or high-perched town,—the most conspicuous of these being Alcalá la Real, through which, had the previous week been drier, our road to Granada would have lain, while the very soil, a rich ruddy brown, added its contribution of colour to heighten the general effect.

Through such scenes, in a day of cloudless sunshine, and tempered warmth, we rode along the upland valleys of the Sierra Frailes from Cabra to Priego.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IT was quite evident, as we rode through the streets of Priego a good hour before sunset, that something of more than common interest was going on. The central square was full of men, who in their long brown cloaks reminded me of the groups, that linger about street-corners in Irish country-towns. It could not be either market, or fair, for not a pig, cow, or horse, was anywhere to be seen, nor even cabbages, potatoes, or bundles of garlic. In these sequestered parts, where travellers are almost unknown, we had everywhere attracted an amount of attention, altogether disproportionate, we felt, to our personal merits, and this was sometimes exhibited in ways rather embarrassing to a modest temperament. Nevertheless, in spite of all the distinction, which had now become our daily portion, we could not flatter ourselves, that all those solemn-looking Spaniards

had come together in the market-place of Priego merely to do us honour.

At present, however, we had no leisure for further speculation on the subject, having yet to discover some place where we could procure lodging for the night. On entering we had immediately gone, as usual, to a *posada*, which chanced to be the only one in the town, hoping to meet with accommodation ; but such utter poverty and emptiness did we find there—bedrooms without bed or chair,—“four blank walls staring at each other,”—the very floors threatening to give way under our feet—that it was impossible to stay under such a roof. We next went to a most comfortable *casa de pupillos*. The proprietor was very civil, and having only one room unoccupied, offered to put three beds into it, an arrangement, which, as Englishmen, we rejected with horror, having never yet been reduced to greater extremities, than sleeping two in a room.

He then told us of a private house in the same street, kept by an old lady with a most meek and obedient partner, such a one, in fact, as the generality of wives would consider quite a model husband. Here, he thought, we might meet with accommodation for the night, strangers being occasionally taken in to lodge. Forthwith

we proceeded thither, and soon found that the husband, who admitted us, was perfectly willing to comply with our wishes, but not being master his good-will availed us little, and we had still to await the decision of his "missis." On opening negotiations with the lady, she became perfectly furious, rejecting our proposal with a degree of indignation, that was quite incomprehensible in a person, who was known to be in the habit of taking in lodgers!

There being evidently abundance of room in the house, while no more reason was assigned for our rejection, than the man who hated Dr. Fell could give for his dislike of that venerable Divine, we grew desperate, and determined to persevere, knowing we had no other chance of beds. Sometimes we joked, sometimes we entreated, throwing in a hint now and then, that if we were absolutely compelled to sleep in the streets, it would hardly be creditable to the hospitality of the good people of Priego, nor should we be able to give our friends in England, on returning home, so favourable a report of them, as we could wish. The husband from the beginning had been on our side, and finding his wife's objections gradually giving way under the fierceness of our assaults, he now ventured

openly to advocate our cause, until at length grievously beset, and hemmed-in by a circle of entreating faces, the fat old soul melted into hospitality, placed the house and all its contents at our disposal, and lent herself heartily to make us comfortable !

It turned out afterwards, that from the first she had been labouring under an entire misconception, fancying we were a party of French bagmen, the only species of the genus traveller, with which the population of this out-of-the-way region has any acquaintance. These people are by no means a popular class of lodgers, as they give an infinity of trouble wherever they are taken in, extemporizing their apartment into show-rooms, for the various articles they carry with them, and receiving all sorts of customers for their wares. No wonder, then, the old lady should have declined to entertain us, as long as she mistook us for a party of *commis-voyageurs*.

Having thus provided for our most pressing necessities, we had now leisure to attend to matters in general, and on inquiring what had brought together that concourse of men we had passed in the market-place, were told, that two ladies having completed their noviciate, had to-day taken the black veil at a nunnery in the

town. This event, combined with the impending war against Morocco, which most Spaniards of the middle and lower classes regard as a new Crusade, had produced a profound impression in the neighbourhood, kindling a fervour of religious enthusiasm, which, however misdirected, is very refreshing in these days of sceptical indifference. Unluckily for us, England being supposed to have a direct interest in thwarting the expedition against Morocco, partly on Protestant, partly on political grounds, our countrymen at the moment were more than commonly unpopular in Spain, and we naturally came in for our share, so that while we were on our way through the market-place at Priego, the countenances of the crowd wore anything but a friendly expression. One individual went so far in his zeal against us poor "heretics," as to say, though not in our hearing, that we "ought to be presented with a blossom," a playful figure of speech, which, when translated into less poetical language, intimated his conscientious conviction, that we deserved to be stabbed!

We were then going to see the "lion" of the place, at the particular request of our host, who seemed very anxious to obliterate the recollection of any previous *désagrémens*. This proved to

be a very pretty kind of fountain, or rather water-basin, oblong in form, with curved sides, of marble, through which flowed a spring of limpid purity and considerable volume, falling eventually in a fairy-like cascade over a slope of the same material, in its downward course towards the town. Lime-trees with seats underneath, are planted all round, and in warm weather a more delicious lounge cannot be imagined. The whole of this highland district might be described in the language of Scripture, as "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills," and from that circumstance and its comparative coolness, it might well be visited even in summer, and early autumn.

We returned to our quarters followed by a troop of boys, a species of escort, to which we were becoming accustomed by frequent use. Indeed, without departing from historical accuracy, I may say we were objects of curiosity to every class and age. Not even

" the Anthropophagi,
And the men, whose heads do grow
Beneath their shoulders,"

could have produced a greater sensation, than our appearance in the streets; whichever way

we turned, doors and windows were crowded with eager faces, so that we were not sorry to escape into a less-conspicuous position. Our landlady was delighted to find one of the party was a clergyman, both she and her goodman having, she told us, a great respect for the order. In consequence of this prepossession, her attentions to me became so marked and particular, that I should have been completely overwhelmed, had I not felt the distinction was owing to no merit of my own, but because I had been elevated for the moment to the dignity of a "Representative Man." It seemed to afford her special gratification to pat me on the back in most maternal fashion, following up the action with a sort of purring accompaniment of "O Padre Cura! O Padre Cura!"

We had scarcely finished dinner, when such a *posse* of townsmen, and neighbours were announced (professedly to pay their respects to the *Señores Ingleses*, but really to gratify their curiosity to greater advantage), that we had to hold quite a *levée*, and the old lady's best parlour was soon filled with a goodly company of grave personages, who behaved with exemplary propriety and decorum. We did our best to entertain them, though from our ignorance of Spanish it

was somewhat after the fashion of Captain Cook, and other circumnavigators, receiving the islanders of the Pacific. There happened to be an old piano in the room, the bequest of an organist, who had once lodged there, and on this instrument, whose best melody was a mere metallic vibration, Lord Portarlington played several tunes; while I exhibited my compass, and a pocket-knife fitted up with various appliances, one of which, a lancet, as might be expected from so blood-letting a population, excited particular admiration. By this time it was getting late, and as the Spaniards have an unlimited power of sitting, we were at our wits' end how to bring our *soirée* to a conclusion, without giving offence to the company; and it was only after a considerable expenditure of palaver and circumlocution, that we effected this object, and parted with many expressions of good-will.

I was out of doors betimes, next morning, having sat up nearly all night, in consequence of a damp bed (the only occasion, by the way, on which such an incident befel me, during the whole expedition); and though sitting up in a hard-bottomed chair is not the most agreeable method of passing "the small hours," it is, at

any rate, preferable to the contingencies of a pair of damp sheets.

Soon after sunrise, I found myself on the town walls, and anything more lovely, than the prospect that met the eye on every side, I never saw. Priego stands on the extreme edge of a precipice, overhanging a deep ravine, laid out in garden-plots, and strips of bright green meadow, through which the Xenil, a new-born stream, struggles forth into the lowlands, on its way to the Vega of Granada. To the left, rose a most picturesque range of mountains, their sides seamed with many a ruddy line, which wintry torrents had ploughed in the ochreous soil, while the whole landscape was flooded with morning sunshine, and an atmosphere of such perfect transparency as brought the most distant objects into startling proximity and distinctness.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IT was with many tender adieux and good wishes, that we parted after breakfast from our host and hostess, who assured us with much earnestness, that should we ever chance to be passing through Priego on any future occasion, they would be delighted to receive us again.

We had a long ride before us, wishing on the morrow, November 30th, to reach Granada early in the afternoon, so as to enjoy the beautiful scenery by which it is environed. Our course lay entirely among the mountains which enclose the Vega to the north-west, and was of a very different description from any we had yet travelled. For a considerable distance we skirted precipices, that reminded me of the old road from Visp to Zermatt, where a single false step would carry horse and rider a good deal further than would be pleasant, landing them at last, it might be, on the roof of one of the picturesque

old mills, green with damp and moss, which the Moors of by-gone days had perched here and there, upon many a ledge of rock, over the streams of this wild district.

One such spot we particularly noticed, just where the summit of a mountain opposite is crowned with a cross, to commemorate the death of a man, whose horse having run away, carried him sheer down the precipice. A similar monument stood by the wayside on our approach to Cabra, recording the death of a gentleman, who with his horse was killed near the spot during a thunder-storm. Most travels in Spain make frequent mention of what Wordsworth calls "the votive death-cross," indicating the scene of a murder, or some other violent death, and we fully expected, that in Andalusia at least, such memorials would be as common as milestones. Ford speaks of having once counted fifteen crosses within a space of fifty yards. We saw very few in any part of the country, owing probably to the comparative suppression of brigandage.

The mountain-tracks being very intricate, we engaged a man to pilot us to-day, and he must either have undertaken more than he could accomplish, as had been the case with previous

guides, and so through ignorance led us astray, or else in this neighbourhood a road does not signify the same thing as in other parts of the globe. For miles we had to follow the bed of a torrent, which happening to be dry was at our service for the nonce, scrambling up such stairs and ledges of rock, and then plunging again into such deep holes and narrow gullies, as no quadruped that had not received the special education of a smuggler's horse, could ever traverse in safety. Had we chanced to be overtaken by a thunder-storm, while struggling through these difficulties, the donkeys must inevitably have been swept away by the torrent, the wide strips of sand and stones, that lay here and there in the more open spaces, giving a plain proof of the violence with which it occasionally dashes down the defile. Happily no such catastrophe occurred, the day being beautiful; and having at last overcome all difficulties, we soon reached a village at the top of the pass.

Here we wished to feed the horses, but our guide being of a different mind posted onwards down the mountain-side, with an obscure intimation, not very palatable to hungry men, ignorant of his vernacular, that further on there

was a *venta*, where we should halt to greater advantage. Nor did we question the judiciousness of the arrangement, when having quitted the mule-track we found ourselves entering the courtyard of a solitary farm-house, with the snow-clad chain of the Sierra Nevada rising before us in cloudless majesty, at a distance of about forty miles. It was our first view of the Spanish Alps, which in the Picacho Mulahacen attain a culminating elevation of 12,762 feet, and although they exhibit neither the massive grandeur, nor the variety and gracefulness of outline that distinguish the mountains of the Oberland, Zermatt, and Chamouni, they still possess attractions of their own, imparting to the moment they are first sighted, an interest never to be forgotten.

Granada, with all its associations of chivalry and romance, was no longer a dim and shadowy picture sketched by the imagination, but a substantial and visible reality, and we were now in sight of a region where some of the most remarkable events of Spanish history had been transacted. Even the grassy slopes, and undulating sweep of the mountain plateau, that stretched before us in all the commonplace tameness of an upland farm, had once formed a

portion of the Border-land, which Christian and Moslem for so many ages had made their battle-field, and over this very ground had the flower of Spanish knighthood descended oftentimes in sudden raid upon the villages of the Vega.

We had not, however, much leisure for day-dreaming, and after a hasty meal were once more on horseback, having still an unknown distance to travel, before we could hope to find a halting-place for the night. In fact, among the mountains you can form no estimate of distances, the league of a Spanish mountaineer being quite as indefinite a measurement, as the aggravating "bittuck" so heartily anathematized by pedestrians in the Highlands. From Cabra to Priego is called three leagues, but they must have been estimated on a very liberal scale, as it took us a whole day's travelling of average speed to accomplish the journey. At this moment, while descending the mountain-side, we had very little idea where we were going, beyond a vague belief that we were on our way to Granada. Our guide, if he could be dignified with such a title, was hardly better informed than ourselves, having evidently nothing but the faintest apprehension of the route, and so reserved in speech was he, that question

after question elicited only the briefest replies. From time to time we heard mention of Casa Lope, but whether it was a posada, or merely a private house, where we might receive admission for the night as a favour, seemed enveloped in the profoundest mystery.

The donkeys and mules had become very disorderly this afternoon, owing to the vivacious sallies of an undisciplined young jackass (a recent purchase, it appeared, at Cordova), which, being exempted from carrying a load in consideration of his tender years, was named by us "the donkey of respect," because, like the unoccupied "coach of respect," that makes such a figure in the royal retinue of Spain, he had nothing to do. He was continually breaking out into some juvenile extravagance, leaving the beaten path and walking in self-chosen ways, to the serious demoralization of the other donkeys, and then, for his pains, getting a sound cudgelling from the irate Marcos. As it takes some time to catch, on rough ground, a nimble Spanish donkey "without encumbrance," and with a thrashing in prospect, we did not get on very fast this afternoon, and so were too late to see the snow-crested peaks of the Sierra Nevada lighted up with the rosy flush of sunset, as we had

fondly hoped. This was very provoking, there being every probability, that had we been more advanced on our way, we might have reached such a point of view as would have enabled us to enjoy the glorious spectacle of an Alpine sunset.

Night soon overtook us picking our way, as best we could, through puddle and mire, under the light of a young moon, whose slender crescent seemed an appropriate sign to meet the eye of travellers on their road to the classic ground of Western Mahometanism. Thus passed two or three hours, the night-air among the mountains, at the end of November, making the prospect of a warm chimney-corner especially attractive. Still no token of village or posada appeared, and, to mend matters, our guide became confused, and having lost all recollection of the route, left us, drawn up in the middle of the road, while he went to make inquiries at a farm-house. This interval we naturally devoted to the exercise of a privilege seldom left long in abeyance (say the critics), by our countrymen, Lords and Commons alike, and for which there is little need "to search for precedents." In the midst, however, of our growling and discontent, to which hunger was beginning to im-

part additional acerbity, we could not help admiring the beauty of the shepherds' watch-fires, as they flashed up fitfully against the murky sky, from mountain slope and moorland; nor could we recollect without some feeling of self-rebuke, the hardships of those poor men, who, every night of the year, winter and summer alike, take their turn in watching their flocks, and, like Jacob of old, are "consumed with drought by day, and with frost by night, while sleep departs from their eyes," with no Rachels, moreover, to sweeten their labours. For the shepherds of Spain are an almost wifeless brotherhood, their way of life seldom permitting them to marry.

Still, whether we grumbled or philosophized, it was all one. Casa Lope remained provokingly unapproachable, and beginning to regard its existence as a myth, we quite expected we should soon have to follow the example of the shepherds, and bivouac for the night by the wayside. At last we discovered a cottage, and on making the usual inquiry, "How far is it to Casa Lope?" were answered in tones which struggled forth with a muffled sound, apparently from under heaps of bed-clothes, "that we must ford a brook, climb a hill, and then

we should speedily find ourselves at our destination."

In the course of half an hour this prediction was satisfactorily fulfilled, and we entered the gateway of a building, which looked gaunt and spectral in the uncertain light, just as the young moon was sinking over the western hills.

This was Casa Lope, and though we were never very critical of appearances, much less after a ride of thirteen hours, a more deplorable-looking place cannot well be imagined. Judging from its extent and proportions, we concluded it had been built long before the formation of new roads had drained the general stream of traffic from the Pass of Puerto Lope, on the ancient highway between Cordova and Granada. But now its roomy stables were untenanted, the lofty chambers dismantled of their furniture, and our footsteps echoed mournfully along the spacious corridor, into which the rooms on the first floor opened. Having nothing antique or venerable in its appearance, it gave one, on a small scale, a very good idea of the condition and aspect our cavalry-barracks would exhibit after about twenty years' ascendancy of the Peace Society. Happily as we entered there was a good blaze on the hearth, and though the people of the

house were by no means kindly disposed, or even civil, they could not deny us seats among the muleteers, who surrounded the fire. The only beds available were shake-downs on the brick floor, in one of the upstairs rooms, of which Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes took advantage. I preferred an arrangement of three chairs, which, if hard, were at any rate clean, and inodorous, and I managed in this way to get a brief doze, in spite of the gusty draughts, that eddied through the long corridor, where by choice I had taken my station. It required no great persuasion to start us betimes next morning, and soon after seven we had bidden (let us hope) an eternal farewell to Casa Lope, a bourne to which no traveller would willingly return.

The ground was crisp with hoar-frost, and the transparent clearness of the fresh morning air brought the glittering crest of the Sierra Nevada, and the snow-white villages of the Vega into a proximity that cheated the eye of half the distance. It now became evident how fortunate we had been yesterday in our view of the principal peaks of the great chain, Picacho Mulahacen, and Picacho de Veleta. As we then saw them they were noble objects, while the greensward of the pastures over which we looked at them, formed

a foreground that threw them out to the greatest advantage. But to-day our point of view being changed, other ranges of far more picturesque form, and varied outline, came into sight on the north-east, though none of them was crowned with a diadem of snow.

With Illora on a hill to our right, we could now distinctly make out the buildings of Granada on the opposite side of the Vega, clinging to the lowest terraces of the Sierra Nevada, and it was with the pleasant feeling of having prosperously accomplished a long-cherished design (seasoned, I trust, with a spirit of thankfulness), that we descended the paved causeway leading to the village of Pinos.

Purkiss had ridden on before, to see what he could provide for our mid-day meal, and on dismounting at the cleanliest and neatest of posadas, which after Casa Lope looked like a traveller's Paradise, we found with much satisfaction he had been most successful in his catering, and we now made ample amends for the scantiness of yesternight's supper. The old lady of the house, finding we were going to Granada, volunteered some very maternal advice respecting its inhabitants, whom she did not seem to regard as the most virtuous community in the world; and

though, from our very limited acquaintance with Spanish, she did not succeed in conveying to us any very distinct idea of the perils that awaited us in the old Moorish capital, her kindness and good-will were equally manifested, and appreciated accordingly.

Just outside the village we passed a spot of far deeper interest (to my mind) than most of the scenes that history has ennobled. It was on the bridge, which here spans one of the tributaries of the Xenil, that Queen Isabella's messenger overtook Columbus, when, disgusted with the delays and disappointments he had so long encountered at the Spanish Court, he set out in February, 1492, to quit Spain for ever, on his way to offer his services to our Henry VII. For seven years he had been seeking in vain for that assistance from Ferdinand, which was necessary to the success of his grand project; and when now at last Isabella, larger-hearted and more prescient than her husband, offered her aid, it was almost too late, and Columbus, warned by bitter experience, hesitated to expose himself anew to the vexatious intrigues of a Court, that had already wasted some of the best years of his life.

It was a moment of intense interest. How

must his mind have been agitated by the tumult of contending feelings! On the one hand, with what bitterness, and unavailing regret would he look back on the vain struggles and hopes deferred, which month by month, and year by year, had sickened his heart, producing a most natural repugnance, even in his brave spirit, to re-embark on such "a sea of troubles." While on the other, wherever else he turned, a still more cheerless prospect opened before him. He was now on his way to England, but though going there under the patronage of Henry, he could hardly expect to find his path perfectly clear. He would still be a stranger among strangers, to begin anew the wearisome task of disarming self-interest, enlightening ignorance, and conciliating prejudice. Whereas now at length, Isabella's unexpected offer seemed likely to realize his fondest aspirations, and the mere word of the good Queen would exercise an influence on him the most solemn promises of the selfish Ferdinand had no longer the power of producing.

During the centuries of war that preceded the final expulsion of the Moors from Spain, the spot we were now passing had witnessed many a gallant deed of high emprise, and the waters of

the Xenil were often crimsoned with the bravest blood of Christian and Moslem. It was the pass by which the Spanish chivalry used to carry their forays up to the enemy's gates, from some of their nearest strongholds, such as Alcalá la Real, or even occasionally from Cordova itself. One of the worst disasters recorded in Spanish history took place in the immediate neighbourhood, when on the 26th of June, 1319, an army of such numbers, "as covered the face of the earth," commanded by the Infantes Pedro and Juan, was utterly routed by the Moors with the loss of 50,000 men, including the two Princes, one of whom, Don Pedro, was skinned, stuffed, and hung up over the gate of Elvira. Nearly two hundred years later, the bridge of Pinos was the scene of one of the bloodiest encounters of the last Moorish war, when the royal army under Ferdinand forced the passage after a desperate resistance.

But of all the events, of which the bridge of Pinos has been the theatre, though they may occupy a larger space in the pages of history, none can be compared in point of genuine interest with the unrecorded conflict, which took place that memorable February day in the mind of Columbus, when, in answer to Isabella's invita-

tion, he decided to return to the royal camp at Santa Fé, where the King and Queen then resided, having in the previous month accomplished the crowning achievement of their reign by the conquest of Granada.

From this spot nothing lay between us and Granada, but the famous Vega, a plain which, occupying the bed of a dried-up lake, runs up to the walls of the town, and stretches some thirty miles to the westward, an uninterrupted expanse of verdure and fertility. Doubling the base of a mountain, Elvira, which projects like a promontory into the bosom of the Vega, we rode in single file along the narrow path by which alone, for several miles, Granada was approachable on the Cordova side. Not but what a road of unimpeachable dimensions exists in that direction; but when we passed on the 30th of November, it was a mere causeway of mud, with depth and width enough to engulf all the donkeys in the neighbourhood, one of which, as its half-devoured carcase testified, had recently sunk therein, to rise no more.

The existence of such a road, within a league of such a place as Granada, would be almost incredible to those, who have not travelled in Spain, where the highways are invariably worse

kept in the vicinity of large towns, than out in the country.

This portion of the Vega is an uninteresting level of irrigated cornfields, divided by banks of earth, and intersected in every direction by water-courses, which at this season were brimful, so as to flood all the intermediate ground, for the purpose of stimulating the vegetation of the newly-sown grain. Having in due course emerged upon firm road, near a grove of the finest cypress-trees I ever saw, we soon entered the town, threading several narrow lanes of most Oriental appearance, and passing the graceful archway of the well-known Casa del Carbon, while our cavalcade attracted universal notice, we crossed the torrent-stream of the Darro, and entering the principal thoroughfare, alighted with much satisfaction at the doorway of the Victoria Hotel.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GRANADA, *December 1st.*—It was to the Cathedral we went first, on the morning after our arrival, reserving the Alhambra, which is some distance from the hotel, for the afternoon, when we should have more time to devote to this culminating object of our tour. The Cathedral, a handsome, half-Gothic, half-classical building of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, profusely ornamented with jasper, and precious marbles, is utterly deficient in solemnity and grandeur of appearance, and its glaring, white-washed interior would be infinitely improved by the introduction of good painted glass. It contrasts disadvantageously by its excess of light, which in summer must be quite overpowering, with every other Spanish Cathedral we saw, where the opposite extreme prevails; and in the awe-inspiring gloom, into which you suddenly emerge from the broad

sunshine, as at Toledo and Seville especially, painting, and sculpture, retablo, and alabaster tomb, present to the eye a perplexing, undistinguishable mass, in which beauty of detail, and distinctness of outline, are altogether lost in the surrounding twilight. I missed here the nearly-universal St. Christopher, which, in most Spanish Cathedrals, towers, a Colossus in fresco, near the transept-entrance, so as to be seen by all on going in, it being a popular belief, that no one, who looks at this Saint, can come the same day to an evil end.

We hurried onward to the *Capilla de los Reyes*, where Ferdinand and Isabella lie buried. This chapel, a very good specimen of Florid Gothic, adjoins the southern side of the Cathedral, and is one of the most interesting spots I ever visited. It is separated from its antechapel by the most superb *reja*, or screen of iron-work, we saw anywhere in Spain, the land (as I have already remarked, more than once), *par excellence*, for cunning workmanship in gold, silver, and all kinds of metal. The abundance of light is here a great advantage, as it reveals every portion of *El Maestro Bartolomé's* exquisite design, as well as the alabaster glories of the royal tombs, which fill up the whole

area between the screen, and the high-altar of the chapel. Passing onwards by a side-door, we stood above the vault, where the remains of Ferdinand, Isabella, and their daughter, the poor insane Juana, with her husband, Philip of Burgundy, are entombed, while on either hand, a magnificent monument of noble dimensions, and superb execution, rises to the height of some five feet above the chapel floor. Each of these monuments, which are said to be the work of an Italian sculptor, has the form of an altar-tomb, with recumbent figures of a royal pair, life-sized, reposing on its horizontal surface. Descending into the vault below, we saw the four coffins, which, having been concealed during the French occupation of Granada, remain exactly in their original condition. They are perfectly plain, and almost rude in their construction, each bearing the initial of its occupant. Isabella's coffin is marked with the letter *Y*; for the Spaniards write the name of their greatest Queen, not as we do, but "Ysabel."

The leading idea of this chapel is the conquest of Granada, which is reproduced again and again, in every feature. On each side of the high-altar are some remarkable carvings in

wood, coloured, gilt, and draped in character, so as to be exact representations of the King and Queen in face, form, and costume, as they appeared at the taking of the city. That circumstance gives these carvings historical interest; nor is it unworthy of remark, that they are represented in an attitude, then beginning to go out of fashion in works of art, though no other could be more suitable, even to those powerful monarchs, who in the conquest of Granada were acknowledging the crowning event of their glorious reign—they are on their knees, devoutly giving thanks to Almighty God for the victory over the Moors. Their faces are precisely of that character, which convinces the beholder of their life-like truthfulness, veritable portraits in fact, and not mere creations of the imagination—Ferdinand heavy, and slow-minded, but resolute; Isabella calm, benevolent, and wise, with more comeliness than beauty.

The high-altar is panelled with carvings of the same date and description, illustrating the surrender of the Alhambra. Ford, a good judge of Art, and perfectly acquainted with all that Spain contains of greatest interest, remarks that few things in the whole land are more curious.

Isabella, on a white palfrey, rides between her husband, and Cardinal Mendoza. Boabdil comes forth on foot to meet them, and delivers up the key of the town, holding it by the wards. Behind the King and Queen appear the ladies of the court, knights, and soldiers; while the Christian captives, whom the surrender has just restored to freedom, march out, two and two, in long procession, a glad, and thankful company.

The carvings on the other side of the altar set forth the conversion of the Moors, who preferred Christianity with Granada, to Mahometanism without it. The artist may not have intended it, but nothing can be more dismal, and unhappy, than the countenances of these converts, as if the reception of Christianity had been to them anything but a privilege. Indeed, the manner in which they are taken to the font for baptism, gives one far more the idea of a flock of sheep being driven into the fold, than the voluntary act of free agents; while their number would lead one to fear, that adequate instruction and preparation must have been altogether impossible. The artist has, perhaps unconsciously, quite illustrated the general spirit (at least) of those "various modes—sometimes by blandishment, sometimes by rigour, sometimes exhorting,

sometimes entreating, sometimes hanging, sometimes burning—by which the hard hearts of the Infidels were subdued, and above fifty thousand coaxed, teased, and terrified into baptism.”* Ford calls particular attention to the mufflers and leg-wrappers of the women, which are precisely of the same pattern as those still worn by the Moors of Tetuan.

I could not help thinking how much happier a country Spain, in all probability, would now be, had a different course been adopted towards her Moorish inhabitants. If, instead of having to make their choice between forsaking Mahometanism, and exile, they had been allowed to retain their old homes (with such precautions as might be deemed necessary to secure their peaceful submission to their new rulers), and their gradual conversion attempted with all the zeal, ability, and other appliances, which the Church of Spain had then the power to employ, the land would in that case have been spared the loss of her most industrious and intelligent inhabitants, and whole districts, once proverbial for good farming, and fertility, saved from their present unproductiveness, and lack of popu-

* *Quarterly Review*, No. lxxxv. p. 78.

lation. As it was, the Spanish hierarchy imitated one of the worst principles of Mahometanism, and forced Christianity upon reluctant multitudes.

The deaf old verger, after giving us ample time for a careful examination of these most curious carvings, and setting a step-ladder, from the top of which we gained a better view of the royal tombs, next proceeded to draw forth, from some hidden receptacle, objects of still greater attractiveness, which had been bequeathed to this chapel by its founders. Among these were Isabella's sceptre, and missal—Ferdinand's sword, and crown—an exquisite Gothic pyx of gold, two feet high, covered with emblems of the Eucharist, and having the base of its pedestal hollowed out so as to contain a representation of the Last Supper, very similar in point of design (but on a greatly-reduced scale) to the famous one by Leonardo da Vinci, every part of it being executed in the most masterly manner—a small picture by Hemling, "The Adoration of the Magi," before which mass used to be said daily, during the siege of Granada—a viril (a species of monstrance) in gold, enamelled, and encircled by diamonds of large size—an embroidered cope, encrusted with gold to such a degree, that un-

supported it would almost stand upright, and covered with subjects from our Saviour's Life, the whole being (it is said) the production of the Queen's own hand, and presented by her to Cardinal Mendoza for the service of this chapel, in addition to two other similar vestments of even greater beauty, richness of colouring, and exquisite workmanship—and last, not least in point of interest, the identical standards used by the Christian army at the siege.

All these relics of the conquest of Granada are in excellent preservation, and as we examined them one by one in that quiet, antique-looking vestry, it seemed all but incredible that more than three centuries and a half had glided away since they were first laid up in their ponderous presses of chestnut-wood, so vividly did they recall the past, making us almost eye-witnesses of those momentous events, in which they had played their part.

We were highly amused with the number and size of the old-fashioned mirrors let into the panelling of the vestry walls for the use of the Cathedral canons, each dignitary having a separate glass for his own special benefit. Every one, initiated into the mysteries of a vestry, is aware that a certain amount of looking-glass

forms an indispensable item of its furniture. But, until I saw the vestries of Burgos and Granada, I always fancied four or five inches of that useful article were quite sufficient for every clerical purpose. It is never, however, too late to learn, and the most interesting piece of original information, respecting the Church in Spain, I was able to pick up, in our whole progress from Bayonne to Gibraltar, consists in the fact, that a cathedral canon cannot don his ecclesiastical vestments without the aid of as much looking-glass as would suffice for the dressing-table of most ladies!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BEFORE setting off for the Alhambra, I must crave permission to introduce our guide and *commissionnaire*, Ximenes, who excited our interest, not only as being a member of the same family as the great Cardinal, but still more as the son of Mateo Ximenes, whom Washington Irving has handed down to immortality in his delightful "Tales of the Alhambra."

Ximenes is the best *lacquais de place* I ever saw, being not only attentive, and obliging, intelligent, and well-mannered, but—a very rare quality in that fraternity—not in the least degree officious, and he shows you exactly what you want to see, without boring you with the twaddle most guides delight in. Our hotel was the Victoria, a name which, repeated in the

Calle de la Victoria, seems intended to be an additional memorial of the conquest of Granada. It is well situated at the northern extremity of the Alameda, and from its front windows commands a good view of the Sierra Nevada, draped in its mantle of snow. The situation is, however, better adapted for summer than winter, as it loses the sun before noon, and our rooms, being totally unprovided with grates, or any sort of fire-place, were miserably cold.

On our way to the Alhambra, we had to traverse some of the oldest quarters of the town, where picturesque streets and dirty alleys, lining each bank of the Darro—a brawling mountain-stream, that intersects the whole length of Granada—are crowded together within the gorge of a narrow ravine, dominated by the towers of the fortress.

Emerging, at length, by the Calle de los Gomeles, and crossing a spacious *plaza*, we entered the classic regions of the Alhambra by Charles V.'s heavy gateway. The dense grove of elms, over which, to our right, peered the ruddy forms of the *Torres Bermejas*, the walks that opened out in serpentine curves, and the situation, a steep hill overhanging the town, combined to recall Heidelberg; but giving our-

selves no leisure to dwell on the outskirts, we hurried forwards to the Gate of Justice, a massive tower of *tapia*, where trials used to be held, with a large open hand cut deep into the keystone of the arch, under which we passed, while, further on in the same building, a key occupies a similar position over another portal. Hastening onwards through a narrow passage in the open air, we came upon a spacious esplanade, *Plaza de los Aljibes*, the Place of the Cisterns, so called from two great reservoirs, cut out of the solid rock, by which it is underlaid, having the *Torre del Vino*, with its elegant Moorish arch, on our right.

The most conspicuous object, however, that met the eye, is the last one would either expect or desire to see in such a spot. For just at the moment when the mind is attuned to the contemplation of some of the lightest and most graceful architecture in the world, and you are eager to experience the sensations of a first impression, there, straight before you, on the choicest site in the whole circuit of the fortress, rises Charles V.'s unfinished palace, a building that in solidity and massiveness almost rivals the most ponderous constructions of Vanburgh. Anywhere else you

might feel disposed to admire its stately form and costly materials; but intruded here, and built (it is said) even upon the foundations of the Moorish winter-palace, pulled down to make way for it, it is nothing better than an insolent barbarism, unworthy such a man as Charles. Nor is one's vexation lessened on finding that it was never finished, in consequence of repeated earthquakes, which took place during its erection, and now the roofless, naked walls stare at each other in blank vacancy. I was very glad we had made our pilgrimage to Yuste before going to Granada; for I could never have enjoyed the same pleasure in visiting Charles's last retreat, after seeing the havoc he committed at the Alhambra.

Every one has noticed the extremely plain, indeed almost shabby, exterior of the Alhambra, especially when viewed in juxtaposition with the highly-decorated façade of Charles's palace. The motive for such plainness is not to be ascribed so much to a desire of producing the greatest possible contrast between its external simplicity, and internal gorgeousness, as to the purpose of averting the evil eye, of which Southern, and Eastern nations have at all times felt so universal a dread. At any rate, a most charming

artistic effect is the result, and from a narrow passage frowned upon by the offices of the neighbour-palace, and with nothing before the eye but the common-place *tapia* walls of the Alhambra, you step at once by a most unpretending little door into the full beauty of that fairy creation, consecrated at once by the associations of Poetry, Art, and History.

We are now in the Alberca. A long marble tank, 130 feet by 30, bordered by parterres of roses, rows of orange trees, and myrtles, with multitudes of gold and silver fish darting to and fro in its glassy waters, fills the whole length of its central area. The two longer walls of this court, which on their lower surface are perfectly devoid of ornamentation, are pierced above by a row of most graceful Moorish windows, opening towards the tank, and looking in that quiet spot, so fraught with a sense of repose and retirement, as if they belonged to a cluster of conventual cells. One end of the Alberca terminates in a most beautiful double arcade; at the other rises the tower of Comares, which, though not attaining an elevation of more than 75 feet by 37, still presents a very imposing appearance as it lifts itself above the surrounding buildings, so light in their

construction, so graceful in their proportions: Within its walls stands the Hall of the Ambassadors, the largest, and one of the most sumptuous apartments in the whole palace, used for the reception of envoys from foreign Powers.

It was here, that, in 1478, Don Juan de Vera delivered to Muley Aben Hassan Ferdinand's demand of the tribute paid by preceding kings of Granada to the Castilian sovereigns—the prelude to the final overthrow of the Moorish power in Spain.

It is a noble room, 35 feet square by 60 in height, crowned by a vaulted roof of *alerce* wood of extreme beauty, and illuminated in gold, red, and blue. The walls are richly stuccoed, and adorned with arabesques of great elegance. In fact, it would seem as if the artist had determined to lavish upon its ornamentation all the resources of Moorish art and taste, for the sake of producing a powerful impression on the minds of the strangers, for whose reception it was destined.

Its situation is unrivalled. As you stand in the deeply-recessed windows, to which the enormous thickness of the walls gives almost the space of small chambers, you command one of the most enchanting prospects in the world, revealing at one glance the fertile bosom of the

Vega, bounded by its amphitheatre of mountains, and the crowded streets of the Albaicin, with its impending terraces of flower-garden, and vineyard; while right opposite, on breezy heights, that overtop Alhambra itself, rise the gleaming walls of the Generalife, surrounded by shady alleys of box-tree, poplar, and cypress.

In its original beauty, and in the hours of early summer, the Hall of the Ambassadors must have been a Moslem paradise, amid the teeming luxuriance of that semi-tropical vegetation, being so contrived, that while a constant current of air breathes freshness through the apartment from the windows, that pierce its three sides, yet by partitions of most elegant lattice-work the sunshine can be tempered into a gentle twilight.

Our visit, however, was not so happily timed, and the bleak winds, and darksome skies of December forbade our indulgence in dreams of the imagination, and urged us onward still.

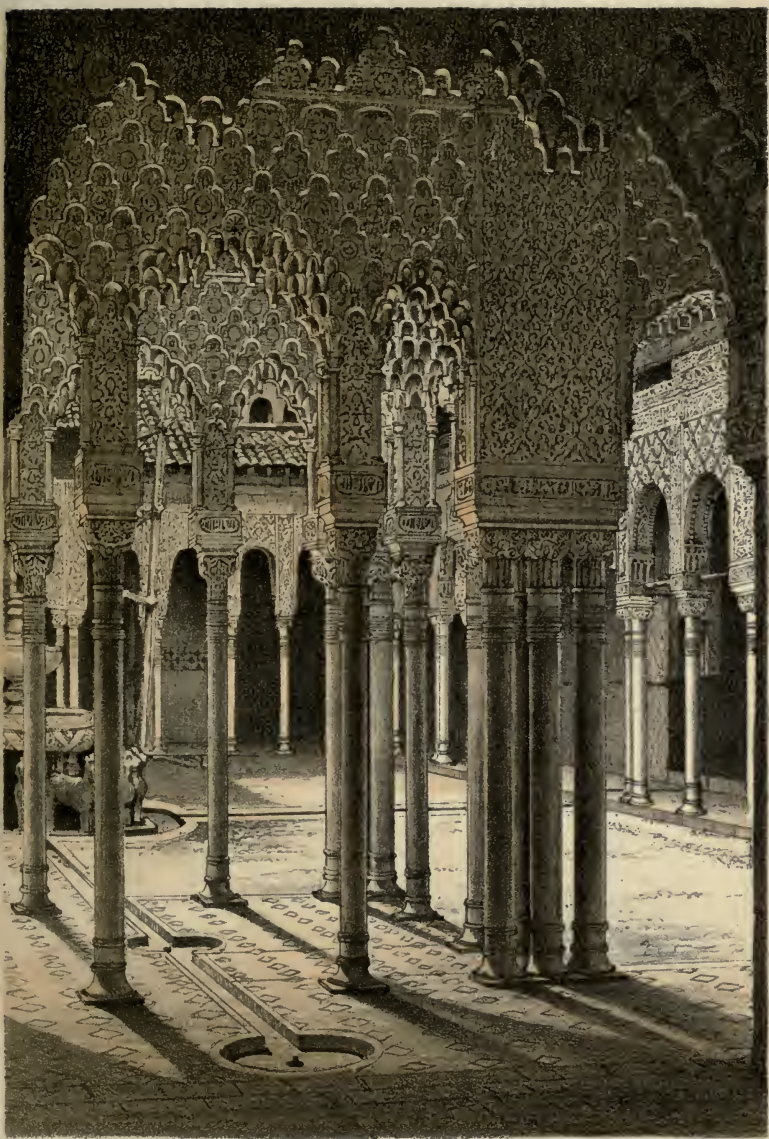
Re-entering the court of the Alberca, we hastened towards the Court of Lions, the central shrine of this sanctuary of Moorish art.

Many persons, forgetting that luxury, not grandeur, is the leading idea of the Alhambra, are disappointed with the dimensions of this court, as if they expected its size to be proportionate

to its fame. To us its actual appearance exactly coincided with our anticipations, and we now enjoyed the intense satisfaction of realizing an almost life-long idea.

The Court of Lions, an oblong of 115 feet by 66 from wall to wall, is divided into two portions, of which the central and far larger division is open to the sky, while the rest consists of a cloister-like arcade, running round the four sides, and supported by more than a hundred columns, of most graceful, fairy-like form, in white alabaster. At each end two projections, constructed somewhat like a covered balcony, are thrown out a few feet, so as to present a very pleasing break in the general outline, when you stand in the centre of the court beside the Fountain of Lions; while within the cloister, each of the deep recesses, gained by the projection, forms a delicious nook, where, in olden time, many a summer hour was whiled away, amid the luxurious repose of couches and ottomans, by the song of the minstrel, and the romance of the story-teller.

When you have mastered the first impression, you observe, that the columns on which the arcade rests, are alternately single and in pairs, with capitals of very graceful pattern, and the



COURT OF LIONS. ALHAMBRA .

walls of the cloister covered with tiles of blue and yellow porcelain, the favourite panelling of the Moors.

I longed to do something for the benefit of the far-famed Fountain of Lions, which, in its present dilapidation and uselessness, mars one's enjoyment of the scene; nor have the lions sufficient character to bear their reverse of fortune with dignity. Indeed, despite every prepossession in their favour, a candid spectator, with the smallest bias towards matter-of-fact, must acknowledge that they are somewhat mangy-looking animals, such as exist, it is to be hoped, only in the regions of heraldry. Fergusson assigns to this court the date of 1325-1333, while the comparative plainness of the Alberca claims an earlier period.

Turning to the right we next enter the Hall of the Abencerrages, with its exquisite honey-combed roof, and central fountain. It was here (according to tradition) that Boabdil massacred thirty-six members of the family, from which the apartment derives its title, and is not the deed incontestably proved by the blood-stains, which sully the purity of the marble floor, as the guides point out with a positiveness of belief, perfectly refreshing in this incredulous age?

Formerly, all persons, guides and their employers alike, enjoyed the satisfaction of believing that those ruddy stains were a perpetual memorial of the bloody event. But one unlucky day, somebody, utterly destitute of romantic feeling and reverence for the *religio loci*, discovered that a tradition, claiming an antiquity of three centuries and a half, had no better foundation, than gross ignorance of chemistry, and, in the language of Cyclopædias, those time-honoured stains “are nothing else but the deposit of water, impregnated with iron, upon the white stone”!!

Since that fatal hour, no educated person dares to indulge in the luxury of the ancient belief, not even under the protection of the gallant appeal made by Ford in its behalf. Romance is powerless to contend with science in the work-a-day nineteenth century.

Exactly opposite, on the other side of the court, is “The Hall of the Two Sisters,” so called from two enormous slabs of Macael marble, without flaw or stain, twins in form and colour, which are let into the pavement. This is perhaps the most beautiful portion of the Alhambra, and in its exuberance of ornamentation, richness and variety of colouring,

and manifold combination of every line that can produce beauty and grace, it is simply beyond description. The proportions are so graceful, the colours so bright and gay, yet subdued into such exquisite harmony, that soothes while it enchants the eye, and every portion down to the tiles, which form a paneling some three feet above the floor, bears the stamp of such refined taste, and infinite inventiveness, that one looks around with a sort of despairing wonderment, unable either to classify the various objects challenging admiration on every side, or to carry off anything more distinct than a dream-like recollection, in which every element of decoration is combined, until it forms a bewildering chaos of beauty.

Fergusson calls it "the most varied, and elegant apartment in the whole palace. The walls of all these are ornamented with geometric and flowing patterns, of very great beauty and richness, and applied with unexceptionable taste for such a decoration ; but it is on the roofs and larger arcades, that the fatal facility of plaster becomes more apparent. Instead of the simple curves of the dome, the roofs are made up of honeycombed, or stalactite patterns, which look more like natural rock-work than the forms of

an art, which should be always, more or less, formal, and comprehensible at a glance, at least in their greater lines, and divisions. There is perhaps no instance where a Saracenic architect has so nearly approached the limits of good taste as here, and it requires all the counter-vailing elements of situation, and comparison with other objects, to redeem it from the charge of having exceeded them.”*

We were greatly struck with the highly-decorated saloon, called *Sala de Justicia*, to which the date of 1460 is assigned. Ten bearded Moors, in the costume of that day, are represented sitting in council, a feature which has suggested the name of the apartment. A number of subjects, boar-hunting, tournaments, ladies fair and gallant knights, both Christian and Moslem, birds and beasts, make up a most curious work, reminding the spectator (as Ford suggests) of some antique illuminated manuscript. It is well worth careful study, and interested me exceedingly, as being a style of decoration I had not expected to find in the Alhambra.

One of the most enjoyable spots in the whole palace is the alcove overlooking the garden of

* Fergusson's Handbook of Architecture, p. 463.

Linderaja with its marble fountain surrounded by roses, myrtles, and orange-trees, from one of which Ximenes plucked some golden fruit, and presented to each of us as a *souvenir* of the Alhambra. On this alcove, called *Tocador de la Reina*, every resource and combination of Moorish art was exhausted, to make it worthy of its destination as the *boudoir* of the reigning Sultana; though even here one is reminded of Charles V.'s barbarism by the hideous brick buildings he erected, which rise in unmitigated ugliness on the opposite side of the garden.

It were endless to describe all the various courts, balconies, galleries, and baths, contained within the circuit of the Alhambra. The Mosque alone, with its exquisite niche, where the Koran was deposited, would long detain an archæologist, even in spite of the cruel treatment it experienced from Charles, who here perpetrated precisely the same offence against good taste, for which he gave the Dean and Chapter of Cordova a scolding they richly deserved on account of their stupid alterations in that unique Cathedral.

Many visitors to the Alhambra have expressed disappointment with its size, so much smaller than their imagination had sketched out. We, on the contrary, were quite surprised to find so

much still in existence, after the ill-usage it has undergone from foreigner and native ever since it was surrendered by the Moors; not to mention the earthquakes occurring so frequently at Granada, against which nothing has proved so effectual a protection, as its own lightness of construction. Of late the Spanish Government has begun to pay some attention to its condition, and the spirit of restoration, which is one of the most cheering signs of the present century, has actually penetrated the Peninsula, and although a genuine Spaniard still considers (as we observed) Charles's heavy structure the fairest ornament of the Alhambra, yet now, I am thankful to say, necessary repairs have been effected, and a gradual restoration, carried out with excellent taste and exact fidelity, is going on, to be eventually extended, let us hope, in these days of Spain's increasing prosperity, to the entire building.

No description I have ever read can be compared for a moment with Washington Irving's "Tales of the Alhambra," a work overflowing with the romantic inspirations of the spot—no mere crude result of a few hurried visits, but the mature production of a lengthened residence within its walls, set forth with all the grace and spirit of a consummate master in the art of

telling a story. In that charming book the last stronghold of Moorish power in Spain is seen under every aspect: at one moment it appears restored to all the freshness of its antique splendour; the magic power of poetry re-peoples its courts with ladies fair, and gallant knights; the song of the minstrel, and the clank of arms are heard once more, as in days of old. At another you see it as it now is, “with its halls waste, and solitary; the owl hoots from its battlements, the hawk builds in its warrior-towers, and bats flit about its royal chambers.”

On leaving the Alhambra, we re-crossed the esplanade, through which we had approached it, and ascended the *Torre de la Vela*, so called because (as Ford states) “on this watch-tower hangs a silver-tongued bell, which, struck by the warder at certain times, is the primitive clock that gives notice to the irrigators below.” On still evenings it can be heard at Loja, thirty miles off. We had stayed in the Alhambra till near sunset, and on mounting the flight of steps leading to the summit of the tower suddenly found ourselves looking upon a panorama of surpassing interest and beauty.

To our left towered the vast mass of the Sierra Nevada, clothed half-way down with a

vesture of newly-fallen snow. Its sides are seamed and furrowed with ravines, where, even in the intensest heats of summer, glaciers, and beds of snow lie unmelted, a never-empty storehouse of Granada's most necessary luxury. The first blush of sunset was just beginning to shed its rosy tints over that broad expanse of virgin white, recalling for the moment some very different scene among the Alps of Switzerland or Savoy, while Granada at our feet seemed transmuted into gold, and such a flood of sunshine came streaming, in slanting columns from the western sky, that we could scarcely discern the long line of brown hills, from which Boabdil cast his farewell look on beloved Granada—the well-known “Last Sigh of the Moor.”

Directly under the sinking sun lay Loja, our next destination, where a gap breaks in upon the mountain-line, and the eye paused in its survey upon the heights above Puerto Lope, the pass by which the Christian armies used to pour down upon the Vega. Those heights we regarded with peculiar interest, because it was from their crest we gained our first view of Granada, and in that transparent atmosphere we could now trace our route, step by step, along the sunburnt slopes, almost down to the famous

bridge of Pinos, which the bleak and barren rocks of Elvira, projecting like a promontory into the plain, just concealed from sight.

In the centre of the panorama, encircled by an amphitheatre of mountains (some of which exhibit outlines of singular boldness, and variety), and occupying the bed of a dried-up lake, more than seventy miles in circumference, lies the renowned Vega, a plain of almost fabulous fertility, where the broad acres clothed at the moment with the emerald-green of young wheat, look more like gardens, than corn-fields; and as the streamlets, with which the plain is intersected in every direction, glisten like threads of silver in the sunshine, it is hard to convince an inexperienced spectator, that instead of gazing at a great sweep of water-meadows, as he would be tempted to fancy, he has really before him the novel spectacle of irrigated wheat-land, which, even under the disadvantages of Spanish cultivation, yields an average harvest of fifty bushels an acre! Such, however, is the fact. As soon as the grain is sown, water is turned on till the young blade appears, and thus a great impulse is given to its growth. It is this system of irrigation, invented by the Moors, and still maintained with a certain amount of efficiency, that

has given the Vega of Granada its proverbial productiveness. Wherever a channel conducts the life-giving stream, there is found an inexhaustible power of growth, and vegetation; one crop is hardly off the ground, before another has started into being, and the earth seems never weary of bearing. But pass the boundary, and enter the spots where water does not penetrate, all is changed at once. On your right you have an Eden, on your left a waste, barren as the seashore, and like it covered with stones, and sand!

Few things at Granada strike the stranger so forcibly, as the abundant supply of the purest, and freshest water, not only in the lower regions of the town, where it can be conveyed with little difficulty, but in situations apparently inaccessible to a water-course. The heights of Albaicin, a picturesque suburb overhanging the Darro, are excavated here and there, with subterranean tanks, containing an almost unlimited supply of water. In fact, the Moors of old seem to have considered good water as necessary to their existence as vital air, and the ingenious contrivances, and appliances employed by them for obtaining it, might be studied by modern engineers with every advantage to the health, and comfort of our great towns.

Before leaving the tower, let us notice the spot, where the Christian standard was first hoisted, when Ferdinand, and Isabella took formal possession of the Alhambra, January 2nd, 1492. It is close to the bell already spoken of, as regulating the irrigation of the Vega. Once every year, on the anniversary of the surrender, that bell is rung for a different purpose. Crowds of peasants then ascend the tower, and every unmarried woman in want of a husband (the majority of the sex, according to the uncharitable assumption of the multitude) strikes the bell, as a means conducive to the attainment of her wishes, and the one who makes most noise (a somewhat ominous preparation for matrimony) is supposed to insure herself the best partner.

Ford, in describing the Hall of the Abencerages, exclaims, "Alas! that boudoirs made for life, and love, should witness scenes of hatred and death!"—a sentiment we could not help extending to the whole circuit of the palace, on hearing from the servants what they witnessed that afternoon in the elm-grove below the Alhambra, while returning to the hotel.

Purkiss, Swainson, and Elfick, with the two muleteers, Marcos and Tomas, had chanced to

come up the Torre de la Vela, while we were there, and they remained some time after us, for the fuller enjoyment of an opera-glass we had left for their use, which enabled them, like ourselves, to trace out the route we had traversed in descending from Puerto Lope. On descending, and passing through the Gate of Justice, they observed about forty yards off, in one of the side-walks of the elm-grove, three men, two being together, while the third, mounted on a donkey, was a short distance apart. There, and then, in broad daylight, within sight of houses, and close to a great city, they saw one of the two men go up to the third, who was unarmed, and almost helpless from intoxication, and attack him with murderous ferocity. The ruffian had in his hand one of the formidable knives universally worn by the Spanish peasantry, and with this he first cut a great gash all down one side of the poor man's face, and then stabbed him again and again, in the chest, until blood streamed from mouth, and nostrils at every breath, and he sank to the ground wallowing in gore. The assassin, having coolly wiped his knife on his trousers, much in the same way as a butcher after killing a beast, walked off with a smile on his face, proud (apparently) of what

he had done, leaving his victim in the agonies of death.

With the natural impulse of Englishmen, Swainson, and Elfick, as soon as they had recovered from the first shock of horror, with which so hideous a sight had electrified them, were rushing forward to render assistance to the poor man, but were so earnestly entreated, nay almost compelled, to desist from their purpose by several bystanders, Purkiss among the number, who knew only too well the state of Spanish criminal law, that they were fain to submit, and as the poor murdered man was fast passing out of the reach of human aid, they all hurried away together, knowing they might be detained for months, in case they were found on the spot.

Such atrocities are of almost daily occurrence in many parts of Spain, and, as we understood, the state of Spanish law is calculated to render punishment next to impossible. For the first thing Government does, is to seize the property of the murdered person, and apply it to the prosecution of the murderer, and thus, in the case of a married man, absolute ruin is often inflicted on his widow.

Scenes of bloodshed and violence frequently

occur, as is well known, in other southern countries, where man's temperament is so much more inflammable, than in cooler regions. But the most shocking characteristic of such occurrences in Spain, is the utter unconcern, and *absence of remorse*, as if the murder of a fellow-Christian were a matter requiring no more sorrow and repentance, than the death of a sheep, or a pig! Many persons (and I think with good reason) have ascribed this lamentable defect in the national character to the brutalizing influence of the bull-ring; while Ford, who, strange to say, is a staunch advocate for that sport, insists, on the contrary, that it is the effect, and not the cause of the Spaniard's inbred cruelty. They were cruel, he asserts, long before the bull-fight was ever introduced, as we learn from classic authors, and its introduction has made them no worse.

But does not such a line of argument utterly ignore all the humanizing influences Christianity ought to bring in its train? Surely that religion, which is to elevate and purify fallen man, and make him partaker of the Divine Nature, must also contain within itself the means of fulfilling its secondary office, to soften and humanize the ingrained ferocity of mankind!

If it cannot discharge with success its inferior mission, must it not fail still more signally to attain its higher purpose?

For my own part, little as I have seen of Spain, and hasty as may be the conclusions I have formed on the subject, it seems to me impossible to disconnect the indifference to human life, so commonly exhibited by Spaniards, from the revolting scenes of the bull-ring, where the nation learns to take delight in bloodshed, and some of the noblest animals God has bestowed on mankind are tortured to death for the amusement of the multitude.

And this takes place, we should remember, not now and then, in one or two of the largest towns, but frequently, during the space of half the year, in all parts of the country, upon a wholesale scale. The bull-fight we saw at Madrid was the eighteenth, and last of the season. On that occasion, eight bulls, and fifteen horses were killed, such being the ordinary amount of slaughter whenever a *Fiesta de Toros* is celebrated. This would give for Madrid alone a yearly average of 144 bulls, and 270 horses, slain in cold blood for the entertainment of Christian men and women. It is true, the horses are reprieved from the knackers to fur-

nish sport in the bull-ring; but that fact in no degree neutralizes the injurious influences exercised upon the spectators by such wanton effusion of blood.

Nor should it be forgotten that these exhibitions occur periodically *all over the country*, from San Sebastian to Gibraltar, and towns of 5000 inhabitants, especially in Andalusia, the headquarters of Tauromachy, are rarely without their *Plaza de Toros*, which is generally the largest and best-cared-for building in the place.

So that, in fact, Spain is deluged with blood every year from end to end, merely for man's amusement, and the more horrible the incidents of the spectacle, the greater the zest and delight with which it is witnessed. The only wonder to me is—not that the Spaniards should be what they are—but that they still retain so many fine qualities, and are not as a nation utterly demoralized.

It is a mere idle retort to remind an Englishman of his national prize-fight. The actors there are voluntary agents, and if they choose to pommel each other to pieces, we can only say it is a misfortune they have not different ideas respecting man's work upon earth, than to use their hands in marring "the human face divine."

The English prize-fight is happily no longer within the pale of the law, and, with the exception of the late encounter, when national feeling was accidentally enlisted, no respectable person would be seen in the ring at the present day.

Whereas in Spain, all classes, from the highest to the lowest, men and women alike, take their place at the bull-fight, as regularly as at opera or play. Ford, in his "Gatherings from Spain," p. 297, remarks, "What public meetings and dinners are to Britons, reviews and razzias to Gauls, mass or music to Italians, is this one and absorbing bull-fight to Spaniards of all ranks, sexes, ages." Nay, even the clergy are carried away by the national impulse, according to the same author. "At Seville, a choice box in the shade, and to the right of the president, is allotted as the seat of honour to the canons of the Cathedral, who attend in their clerical costume; and such days are fixed upon for the bull-fight as will not, by a long church-service, prevent their coming. The clergy of Spain have always been the most uncompromising enemies of the stage, where they never go; yet neither the cruelty nor profligacy of the amphitheatre has ever aroused their zeal

The Spanish clergy pay due deference to bulls, both papal, and quadruped; they dislike being touched on this subject, and generally reply, '*Es costumbre*'—'It is the custom;' '*Siempre se ha practicado asi*'—'It has always been done so;' or, '*Son cosas de España*'—'They are things of Spain;'—the usual answer given as to everything, which appears incomprehensible to strangers, and which they either cannot account for, or do not choose. In vain did St. Isidore write a chapter against the amphitheatre—his *chapter* minds him not; in vain did Alphonso the Wise forbid their attendance. The sacrifice of the bull has always been mixed up with the religion of old Rome, and of old and modern Spain, where it is classed among acts of charity, since it supports the sick and wounded; therefore all the sable countrymen of Loyola hold to the Jesuitical doctrine, that the end justifies the means."—*Ibid.* p. 299.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE Victoria, with a little more capital, might be made an excellent hotel, and after the rough quarters we had found at Casa Lope, and other halting-places between Cordova and Granada, its good beds and cheerful rooms were quite a luxury. The people of the house were most attentive, and our sole complaint was, that Pepe the waiter, who always looked to me like "the fat boy" in "Pickwick" grown up, *would* eat garlic to such a degree, that his presence at meals was quite intolerable, being only one remove from having to eat that abominable esculent ourselves. At last, after enduring the odours, which surrounded his person like a halo, for a couple of days, we induced him (being a very good-natured creature) to go into the garden before our meals, and there eat sufficient parsley (an admirable deodorizer) to neutralize

at least, if not effectually remove, the objectionable smell.

December is by no means the time to *enjoy* Granada, for its position among the spurs and ravines of the Sierra Nevada, combined with its northern aspect, and elevation 2445 feet above the sea, make it far from agreeable to winter-visitors. During the four days of our sojourn there, the fountains, with which it abounds, were glazed every morning with ice of some thickness, and it was so very cold in-doors, that we might well be said more to exist than to live, glad indeed to avail ourselves of paletots, plaids, and other wraps, but cold in spite of them all. Nor, what was worse, could the utmost fervour of our imagination conjure up warmth enough to diffuse around the Alhambra such an atmosphere, as would recall the luxury and enjoyment of its summer-hours.

Let all, who have the power to choose, go to Granada when the song of the nightingale, and the fragrance of the orange-blossom, fill its groves with melody, and sweetness; when the eye, penetrating the foliage of its elm-planted Alameda, rests on the dazzling crest of Mulahacen with a sense of refreshment, to which the contrast of green leaves, and summer-snow lends

an unwonted charm ; when day is Elysium, and night a Dream-land of romance, illumined by the warm beams of a southern moon ; when the Alhambra assumes a garb of beauty, to which, amid the glare of noon, its courts and bowers are strangers, when, according to Irving's poetical description, " Every rent, and chasm of time, every mouldering tint, and weather-stain, disappears. The marble resumes its original whiteness ; the long colonnades brighten in the moonbeams ; the halls are illuminated with a softened radiance, until the whole edifice reminds one of the enchanted palace of some Arabian tale."

Is it surprising, then, that Boabdil should have wept on losing such a paradise, even though, as he looked on Granada for the last time from the mountain-slopes, he beheld it in its wintry aspect ; a circumstance which it pleases one to think may have tended in some small degree to alleviate his wretchedness ? Or can we wonder, that the Moors of Tetuan, down to the present hour, should cling, with the tenacity of an hereditary affection, to the hope of recovering what their forefathers lost, and retain, as they are said to do, the ancient maps and deeds, of the estates and gardens of their ancestors at Granada, and even the very keys of their houses ;

holding them as proofs of their claims, to be made good when the day of restoration comes round?

It had been our intention to leave Granada on Saturday, December 3rd, to insure our reaching Gibraltar in good time for the Peninsular and Oriental Company's next boat to England, due on the 13th. But the first thing we heard of on Friday morning was the dangerous illness of Lord Portarlington's horse from violent inflammation; Marcos and Tomas were with him all night, and he had been bled so copiously that moving him, for two days at least, was quite out of the question; though the veterinary surgeon thought, that with care he might then accomplish the journey, carrying nothing but his own weight.

We were all very sorry to hear this intelligence, for in an expedition like ours, travelling with the same animals day after day for weeks, one soon learns to take an interest in each, and every mule, and donkey even, is regarded with a friendly eye. I had peculiar cause for liking Barbarossa, as I used to call the now-ailing horse. He had not only been the means, by his uncommon steadiness, of saving me from extreme danger, but had carried me most pleasantly some

three hundred miles. Indeed he had but one fault—on no occasion would he behave with common civility to Mr. Sykes's horse, which had never, as far as we were aware, given him the smallest cause of offence. He was, however, in this respect only imitating the example of his betters, there being many a biped, whose antipathies seem to derive an additional degree of acerbity from the circumstance, that they are altogether groundless and unreasonable. This failing used to give us a world of trouble, for it required unceasing vigilance to keep the peace between them. The moment Barbarossa came within a few yards of his *bête noire*, he would make the most hostile demonstrations, neighing defiance, opening his mouth, as if he were about to swallow him up, rearing, striking out with his fore-feet—behaving, in short, more like a horse in a state of insanity, than the good-tempered creature he was in his calmer moments. Fortunately, Mr. Sykes's horse had seen a good deal of the world, having belonged to the proprietor of some livery stables at Madrid, and the good temper, and forbearance, with which he behaved on these trying occasions, were beyond praise; all the quarrelling was on one side, and as a natural consequence it soon came to an end, to break

out again on the first opportunity. This delay gave us two more days at Granada, enabling us to see more and more of the Alhambra, as well as to pay a visit to the *Generalife*, where we had not yet been. We had good reason to congratulate ourselves on our good fortune in being at such a place as Granada, and not, as might easily have happened, in some wretched way-side posada, or dull country-town.

It was on a bright sunshiny afternoon, that descending from the Alhambra by one of its dilapidated portals, called *Puerta del Pico*, and crossing a deep ravine, which separates its site from the *Sierra del Sol*, we gradually attained the breezy heights, and long-drawn arcades, of the *Generalife*, the summer-palace of the Moorish Kings. Its situation is far more striking than that of the Alhambra, and the prospect it commands is of the most varied description—here a craggy defile, where the poplar lifts its head (now golden with the hues of autumn), as if it strove to overtop the steep, to whose shelter it owes its unwonted growth; and the brawling brook leaps from rock to rock, hastening to reach the plain—there the teeming suburb of Albaicin, with its cool Alameda overhanging, like a terrace, the torrent stream of

the Darro, while further on, the rich, cream-white mass of the Cathedral, and slender tower of San Jeronimo, catch the eye ere it finally rests on the verdurous expanse of the Vega, and the dark-brown mountains of Elvira, and Puerto Lope.

As the Moor left it, the Generalife must have been a delicious retreat, where Art had turned to hourly use whatever Nature ministers to bodily enjoyment. Water, the great luxury of such a climate, was everywhere. It soothed the ear with the plashing fall of fountains; it cooled the air with jets thrown upwards to an enormous height, to descend again in spray upon myrtle, and rose; it murmured a pleasant sound in cascades; nay, the very balusters, linking one sweep of terrace to another, were converted into runnels, where a never-ceasing rill trickled over its marble bed.

The villa itself is scarcely worth entering, having been sadly marred, since the days of Boabdil, by the introduction of features utterly at variance with its original character, which give it almost a cockney air. We passed out by a garden-door upon the mountain-side towards the *Silla del Moro*, "the Seat of the Moor," so called, because Boabdil is said to have retired

to this spot during a popular outbreak, and “remained all day seated on the rocky summit, looking mournfully down on his factious city.”

Nothing can be more abrupt than the transition from the Generalife, with its blooming gardens, and groves of cypress, and myrtle, to the parched slopes along which we continued our walk, where hardly a blade of stunted grass can find root. So is it usually in Southern Spain; cultivation, and abundance of water will convert the wilderness into an Eden; and the desert and the garden are ever side by side.

We extended our walk to some distance, along mountain paths, while the sun was sinking into his couch of saffron and purple, over the defile of Loja, and it was twilight before we finished our circuit by re-entering the precincts of the Alhambra at the *Siete Suelos*, where, with an ever-watchful regard to the interests of the commissariat, we purchased some *jamones dulces de las Alpujarras*, sweet hams of Trevelez in the Alpujarras range, from a very good-humoured woman, of whose comestibles Ximenes gave a highly-favourable report.

One morning we went to the Church of San Jeronimo, the burial-place of the Great Captain, Gonsalvo de Cordova. It was designed by

Diego de Siloe, son of El Maestro Gil, the artist to whose genius the convent of Miraflores owes its unequalled tomb and retablo. At present, when Spaniard and Frenchman have done their worst to deface its beauty, one can hardly judge of its original condition. Like the Cathedral, it greatly needs the solemnizing effect of painted glass, being flooded with excessive light, and the unusual span of its arches increases this defect. The most interesting objects, now left within its walls, are the life-sized effigies of Gonsalvo, and his wife, placed in the posture of prayer, on each side of the high altar, several feet above the floor. These have quite the look of authentic portraits. Ford states, that at the suppression of the convents in 1836, when the popular feeling was not, as in England at the Reformation, *with* the monks, a mob broke into this church, and destroyed everything in the most wanton manner. Even the bones of the Great Captain, the only eminent general Spain ever produced, as well as the remains of his wife, were dug up and scattered to the winds by the hands of their own countrymen! The rest of the convent is now converted into a cavalry-barrack.

Many of the old Moorish houses still exist,

though in sadly-altered circumstances. One called the *Casa Chapis*, with its *patio*, and wooden galleries, stands charmingly situated on the brow of Albaicin, fronting the Alhambra; while the *Casa del Carbon*, so well known from its Saracenic arch, which has long served manuals and glossaries of architecture with a stereotyped specimen of the Moorish style, was repeatedly passed by us, on our way towards the upper town. It is said to have been built as early as 1070 A.D., and in after-ages was used as a royal mews. Nothing can be more deplorable and filthy, than its present condition, degraded into the habitation of charcoal-burners (whence its modern name), and other members of the "great unwashed" fraternity. One may hope something will be done to rescue it from the neglect into which it has fallen, especially as, in addition to the restorations carried on at the Alhambra, a very pretty Moorish arcade standing at right angles with the *Zacatin* (the street of the silversmiths), and having a row of shops on each side, which from their tiny dimensions look almost like children's play-things, is now undergoing the same process.

Mr. Sykes wished to meet with some specimens of the illuminated wood-carvings, so gene-

rally introduced into the retablos and monumental remains of Spain, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and directed Ximenes to make inquiries at the different curiosity-shops of the town for that purpose. Ximenes was always anxious to please, and set about the commission with his usual alacrity and good-nature; but not being blessed with a very discriminating knowledge of Art, the result of his investigations was by no means satisfactory. He seemed to think anything in the shape of carved wood, with paint upon it, would do. As a natural consequence, the lobby of the hotel frequently exhibited a very miscellaneous collection of the wood-carver's handicraft, brought there for inspection; and one day, on returning from a walk, I found Pepe, and the chamber-maid, standing in an attitude of intense admiration, amounting almost to a minor species of image-worship, before a chubby-faced infant, in wood, with a high colour and brown drapery, having very much the same type and expression of countenance, as the cherubs and seraphs, with which the church-wardens of the last century used to adorn the altar-pieces of our Parish-churches.

Much has been said of the disagreeable

effects produced upon travellers in Spain by the water, and the length of time required for acclimatizing the system to the free use of an element, so necessary in that thirsty land. To some constitutions it is almost dangerous to drink copiously, as one would be tempted to do in hot weather; and although, from the comparatively low temperature prevailing during the whole of our stay in the country, we were not exposed to this temptation, yet even the little we drank was generally followed by unpleasant consequences. Nor, singular to say, did the disagreeable effects pass off, after we had been some weeks in Spain (as might have been expected), but continued to be quite as powerful at Cordova, and Granada, as at Burgos, and Madrid. This circumstance forms another of the numerous objections to a summer tour (at least in the southern portions of the Peninsula), as during that season travellers on horseback must suffer greatly from thirst, without being able to satisfy it with the same impunity as the natives, who are immense water-drinkers, and can quaff quart after quart, without fear of dysentery, or any other disorder.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ON Monday morning, December 5th, we bade farewell to Granada. Purkiss and the muleteers had started the preceding afternoon, to lighten as much as possible the journey to the poor sick horse, which having regained a little of his strength would now (we hoped) be able to reach Gibraltar by easy stages.

Finding the route across the Vega to Loja ran through a featureless expanse of irrigated corn-land, Lord Portarlington engaged a carriage, which took us there comfortably in about six hours. This *trajet* recalled the days of the old Coquette, (which by the way had been sent back from Madrid, reaching the frontier at Irun only just in time to save the deposit-money,) and our posting adventures through the plains of Castille. Mr. Sykes, faithful to the saddle, made the journey on horseback, so that the dis-

tance he rode exceeded that ridden by us, on the whole journey between Toledo and Gibraltar, about thirty miles.

It was a lovely day, and the change of temperature, as we descended into the bosom of the Vega, and receded further from the snow-clad mountains, was exceedingly pleasant, after the chilly hours spent at Granada. We passed through Santa Fé, the town built by Ferdinand and Isabella during the siege, when their camp had been destroyed by fire. I think I never saw so hideous a place. Its form is a square, fenced all round by tapia-walls with four gates, and looking like nothing so much as a vast sheep-pen. It is utterly unworthy to be visited by those whose route does not lie in that direction. The Church too is a monster of ugliness; and all within sight of exquisite Alhambra! Santa Fé is verily the Nemesis of outraged Moorish Art in Spain.

It is only near Loja, that the country, broken up into mountain and valley, and watered by the crystal Xenil, becomes interesting. Much of the plain after Lachar is a mere waste of sand and stones, where nothing will grow for want of water. Loja itself stands in a most picturesque site, commanding the pass through which the

Xenil descends into the lower country, on its way to join the Guadalquivir. Perched upon an overhanging rock, the old Castle, which in Moorish days was a post of importance, dominates the town; below flows the river, with its broken, well-wooded banks; a precipitous rampart of mountain, walls in the defile from the north; while to the south-east, far away beyond the extreme confines of the Vega, rises the vast mass of the Sierra Nevada.

It was a great satisfaction to find on arriving, that the poor horse had accomplished the journey from Granada very tolerably, under the charge of faithful Marcos, who led him carefully the whole distance. He was, however, still unfit for work; another horse therefore was engaged at Loja, to go all the way to Gibraltar, and as his master, a very sinister-looking, elderly man, accompanied us, for the purpose of bringing him back, our party now amounted to nine.

By way of change, I undertook to ride the new horse, transferring to Lord Portarlington (who had quite taken a fancy to him) the trusty old hack from Toledo, belonging to Marcos. His master used to declare he was only eight years old; but he looked more like eighteen, and in addition to some admirable qualities as a

roadster, had a peculiar faculty for spying out of the corner of each eye, which gave him a most grotesque appearance, leading a bystander to fancy his temper was none of the best, a conclusion belied by his behaviour on every occasion; and he became to us a standing caution not to rely too implicitly upon the deductions of physiognomy in the interpretation of character.

The hack hired at Loja, which I rode all the rest of the journey, proved to be a beast of very different disposition. He began by kicking up behind on the smallest provocation, a trick which made him by no means pleasant to follow. In a day or two he developed another quality more immediately affecting myself. Whenever I mounted he contrived, with the perverse ingenuity of vice, to kick at me with his near hind leg, and as the stirrup-irons (if such I may call them, being of bronze) were very small and narrow, of a queer, old-fashioned shape, it was no easy matter to get into the saddle. *Then* it was *my* turn, and I used to give him more than he quite relished of a box-wood plant which I had cut out of the untrimmed parterres in the Emperor's garden at Yuste, and carried ever since as a riding-switch. I must, however, do the poor beast the justice to add, that when once

mounted, a better hack could not easily be found. From his great length of pastern, a characteristic exhibited by most well-bred horses in Andalusia, his action was peculiarly smooth, and pleasant, and his canter easy as the motion of a rocking-chair; while his powers of endurance may be conceived, when I mention, that our last ride, from La Himera to Gibraltar, extended over a whole day and night, consecutively, beginning at 7.30 A.M. on Saturday, and ending about 9 A.M. on the morrow, relieved by only three halts, which, in all, scarcely amounted to five hours; and yet he carried me into Gibraltar as fresh, as if such protracted fatigue were mere play to him.

During our stay at Granada there had been continual hoar-frosts, which, except on one occasion, were not followed by rain, as would commonly be the case in England. Still the weather was very unsettled, when we left Loja, December 6th, there was every indication of a change, while icy piercing blasts, came streaming down in capricious gusts (fortunately to our backs) from the snow-fields of the Sierra Nevada. The country was very pleasant to ride through, many parts being highly picturesque, level sweeps of valley between bold, craggy hills, with an occa-

sional strip of finely-timbered woodland and forest, the very spot for a novelist to locate a troop of brigands, not to mention sparkling trout-streams, which meandered in graceful curves through meadows green with the fresh pasture of autumn, and imparted life and brightness to the scene.

The poor sick horse had started with us from Loja, and for several hours he managed to get on tolerably. But soon after mid-day he flagged so much, that we were obliged to leave him at a lone Venta, standing on the brink of a moorland brook, where we made our noon-tide halt, with Marcos to take care of him. We all did our best, before starting, to make him comfortable in the most sheltered corner of the stable, where the host's cow was quietly ruminating, with little thought of so summary an ejection from her warm bed, to make room for a sick stranger. We left the poor horse with sad misgivings (only too speedily to be verified), for he looked in miserable plight, and we never saw him again! For though Marcos managed to get him on, "with painful steps and slow," as far as Archidona, a distance of about two leagues, the same evening, and there placed him under the care of a veterinary surgeon (who from some

misapprehension had not gone to the Venta according to the directions left at his house, as we passed through the village); yet his illness returned upon him subsequently with such violence, that he had no power to rally, and died the next day.

Little did we imagine, when he started from Toledo full of life, and vigour, carrying himself proudly with arched neck, and flashing eye, while his coat shone lustrous as satin, that after all, his youth and beauty were only leading him so soon to a grave by the wayside! while my old hack, on whose thinly-covered ribs, and ill-tended hide, he looked down with proud disdain, as an "old fogey," antique enough to be his grandsire, would bravely reach the end of that long journey, to earn hereafter, as I venture to hope he is now doing, hard *pesetas* for his master, Marcos Rabosos, at least six days in every week, up and down the steep streets of venerable Toledo.

Poor Barbarossa! he deserved a better fate than to become food for the ravens, that nestle in the rocks of Archidona. Six weeks before he had cost £40, and was worth it all.

Archidona is a long straggling village, built on a steep slope, and paved exactly according to

the natural formation of the ground, without the least attempt to lay the pavement on an even surface ; so that besides the declivity running along its whole length, which in places is excessively abrupt, another slope crosses the street, and between the two it became really quite a business, even after all our experience of Spanish ups and downs, to ride through the place without breaking our horses' knees.

Immediately above the village a group of rocks, remarkable for form and outline, rises in sheer precipices to an elevation of 1800 or 2000 feet ; and as we viewed them from the plain below, (one of the dried-up lake-beds constantly occurring in this part of Andalusia,) the effect was uncommonly striking, nor does the spot need the tradition of having once been the scene of a "Lover's Leap," to give it interest in the eyes of travellers. Again and again did we turn round to gaze at those rocks, which from some points assumed an aspect very successfully recalling, on a reduced scale, the vast obelisk of Mont Cervin, until darkness fell upon the earth, just as we entered a fine pass, the features of which were more suggested than fully revealed, by the faint beams of a middle-aged moon.

To our right we made out the broken outline of a mountain, and through the ravine at our feet a brawling torrent sped downwards towards the plain, while the owl and night-jar were heard but not seen, as they flitted around us with noiseless wings, in quest of food, uttering their plaintive cry.

'There is, I always think, a peculiar charm in a ride by night. So many things never observed during day-hours—atmospheric effects unseen at other times, the ghostly form of lunar rainbow, the flashing shoot of falling star, and the fitful glories of the Aurora Borealis—added to the transient sounds of animal life, the distant baying of a house-dog, or short, sharp, bark of a fox—the silence, and sensation of general repose—besides that special characteristic of a Spanish night-scene—the shepherds' watch-fires, fitfully flashing up against an inky sky—all these combine to invest a ride or drive, after dark, with peculiar interest; and our hours of nightly travel introduced us occasionally to some of the most striking incidents of the whole expedition.

CHAPTER XL.

IT was nearly nine before we reached Antequera, entering the town by a muddy lane, that sorely taxed the nerve and strength of our tired donkeys. We were fortunate enough to find a very respectable cleanly posada, almost worthy to be dignified with the more honourable title of *Fonda*, except that it had no larder. The people of the house, accustomed to early travellers (for in Spain most wayfarers contrive to reach their destination by sunset, and we very rarely encountered any one on the road after night-fall), had settled down into the dull and peevish somnolency that precedes bed-time, so that it was no easy matter to rouse them to even a moderate amount of wakefulness.

Antequera is a town of considerable size, having a population of 16,000, with apparently a considerable amount of traffic; for though

the inn was quite an extensive building, they could only give us two rooms, one long and large, which having first done duty as a *salle-à-manger*, then served two of us for a bed-chamber.

While we were at dinner, a very respectable matron came in to inform us, that the inn could supply different sorts of wines and liqueurs, and even champagne (the most popular of all foreign wines in Spain) would be forthcoming at our call! Such an announcement in any other land would be quite superfluous; but in Spain, where it is the exception, and not the rule, for inns to furnish travellers with anything edible or potable, this information was quite a surprise. We naturally took it for granted that this matron must be the landlady, and looked upon the interest she exhibited in our comfort as a remarkable contrast to our general experience of *posada*-folk. It turned out, however, that her attentions were prompted by genuine good-nature, as she really had nothing to do with the house, being the wife of a French dentist staying there at the moment; and having noticed, that the belongings of the establishment, with the usual *insouciance* of Spaniards, left us entirely to our own devices, she very kindly tried to make up in various ways; while

the husband, who, from his professional wanderings up and down, was thoroughly acquainted with the country, gave us some very useful information, respecting our route to Gibraltar.

Next morning, as I passed their room, the lady appeared at the door, and with a most benign expression of countenance, and considerable amount of pantomimic action, invited me to walk in. A lady's bidding being of course at all times a mandate of unquestionable potency, I entered in meek obedience to her behest, wondering what on earth she could want with me; and on the threshold found myself confronted by a complete set of artificial teeth, which she thrust forward in startling proximity to my very nose, her whole countenance irradiated by an expression of intense delight and satisfaction, as if the ghastly spectacle to which she had so abruptly introduced me, were not only a triumph of her goodman's professional skill (a position I was quite willing to concede without dispute), but an object of admiration also to all the world! I fear my face scarcely reciprocated the expression that beamed in every line of hers, "dental surgery" being precisely one of those departments of Art, in which no one feels the remotest interest, until

compelled to do so by dire necessity. Nay, the mere exhibition of that grinning double row of polished ivory, might not unfairly be regarded as a mocking insult (had the action proceeded from a man), to a traveller in the hungriest region of Europe, where a very slender apparatus of molars, &c., is quite sufficient for all practical purposes; our sole difficulty, day by day, having hitherto been, not so much to provide *teeth*, as materials for keeping them in healthy exercise.

The Antequerians are evidently an observant race, and had we not become inured to such demonstrations, we should doubtless have felt much flattered by the attention they paid us. We considered ourselves fully justified in drawing two conclusions, after witnessing the pertinacity with which a crowd of men and boys hung about the posada, for at least a couple of hours, solely to do us honour. First, that the good people of Antequera are in no danger of injuring their health from excessive application to business; nor, secondly, are they much in the habit of seeing natives of the British Isles.

Our start was deferred until after eleven, as we hoped by that hour to receive some tidings of the poor horse; but after waiting in vain we

set out for Campillos. Our ride was most enjoyable; the day lovely, bright and warm with the soft sunshine of autumn, while the neighbourhood of Antequera is highly picturesque. We not only recovered yesterday's view of the rocks of Archidona, and the pass so dimly discerned the night before; but other mountains of even bolder character came into sight, bounding the prospect to the south, in effective contrast to the broad basin of olive-ground and corn-land (where once a lake had spread its waters), through which for some time our course lay.

Further on we entered upon a wild tract of forest, and oak-scrub, reminding us more vividly of the *dehesas* of Estremadura, than any scenery we had fallen in with for some weeks, and as we approached Campillos, our resting-place for the night, a salt-lake, teeming with wild fowl, added an entirely novel feature to the landscape, being the largest sheet of water we had seen anywhere, since entering Spain. This lake, which did not exceed a mile and a half in length, is crown-property, carefully guarded by a company of custom-house officers, salt being a royal monopoly. It was amusing to hear, that one of the first consequences, in this out-

of-the-way district, of a *pronunciamento* or revolution at Madrid, takes the form of a vigorous inroad upon the salt-pits, the country-people gladly availing themselves of every political disturbance to secure, without expense, a good stock of an article so indispensable to a bacon-loving population.

As we entered Campillos, a village of some size, surrounded by extensive tracts of wheat-plain, with the mountains of Ronda far away on the horizon, the eve of a great Roman Catholic festival, the Conception of the Virgin, was being ushered in with all the hubbub and lack of melody, characteristic of Spanish bell-ringing. We alighted at a posada opposite the church, and finding the evening-air fresh enough to make a fire agreeable, we sat down beside the open hearth, where three generations were assembled, the youngest being represented by a stout baby in its cradle, which one of our party good-naturedly rocked, an attention very graciously received by the senior branches of the family. It was quite one of those pleasant posadas, where travellers meet with civility, cleanliness, and homely, native ways; and though our bed-room windows had no glass, and the doves cooed above our heads at the

first approach of daylight, with no other partition to separate us than a thin ceiling, we thought ourselves well entertained, and the bill was not extortionate.

Although no rain had fallen, and yesterday was quite lovely, the weather had been unsettled for some days. I was not, therefore, much surprised, on first going out, to observe broad masses of dark cloud with ragged edges, chasing each other in rapid flight across the heavens, an omen, I feared, of an immediate down-pour.

Having a long day's ride before us, we set off, nevertheless, through the corn-plain, and had just entered upon some broken woodland, when down came a smart shower, which threatened speedily to render those narrow tracks of stiff clay impassable to the donkeys, and I thought we were fairly in for a wetting at least, if not a detention of two or three days, for heavy rain soon converts such roads into channels of tenacious mud. But suddenly the wind changed, the clouds drifted away, and the sun came forth to shed warmth and gladness over the landscape, inspiring man and beast with new vigour and spirit, that sent us on our way rejoicing.

At that moment we were rounding the barren

heights upon which Teba is perched, far above the plain, and although the town itself was quite out of sight, being built on the other side, we could hear its church-bells, as they rang for the feast, sounding high among the clouds, and reminding me of those unearthly peals described in legend and goblin-tale. The effect of those bells pealing forth their notes from mid-air, without any visible *point d'appui*, was most singular and weird-like.

Teba, though the bleakest spot we saw anywhere in Spain, being a sort of inland "Wolf's Crag," is by no means unrenowned, either in modern or ancient days. The Empress of the French, as every one is aware, takes her title of Condesa de Teba from this mountain-town.

Looking back some 500 years, we read that, at its siege in 1328, when the Moors held possession of the place, Lord James Douglas threw the heart of Robert Bruce, which he was then conveying to the Holy Land, into the thickest of the fray, and followed it to the death. The craggy height upon which Teba stands, rises like an islet out of a broad sea of corn-land, broken up into many a creek and bay running in and out among the hills, the whole of this singular district giving one quite the idea that,

once upon a time, these fertile plains, which are said to produce some of the finest wheat in the world, were all under water, and formed the floor of an ocean.

One of the things that cannot fail to strike a traveller in Spain, more especially in this particular neighbourhood, is the utter absence of farm-buildings. From time to time you see, in riding along, a village or small town high up on a rocky brow, a situation chosen for safety in those troublous days when Moor and Christian strove for mastery, and now retained with loyal fidelity to the past in this change-hating land. But nowhere else does the eye, as it ranges over a sweep of many thousand acres, discern the smallest indication of those buildings, with which the farms of other lands are dotted. The fact is, Spanish farmers have no more store-house, nor barn, than the birds of the air, and the operations of threshing and winnowing wheat and barley, are carried on by them, at the present hour, precisely after the fashion we read of in the Bible, as being in vogue throughout the East, thousands of years ago!

On first entering the country, I used to notice, near most villages, a large paved circle, perfectly level, of about an acre in extent, and stupidly

wondered what purpose it could be intended to answer ! At last I discovered (whether by dint of mother-wit, or through the good-nature of some informant, I cannot now recollect) that these open areas, as I ought to have known from the first, are the identical threshing-floors spoken of so often in Holy Scripture, where oxen or horses, yoked to a sort of crate or harrow, and driven round and round continually, still tread out the corn, as in the days of Patriarch and Prophet.

Any one who wishes to read an account of the operation, will find a very spirited description in Ford's "Gatherings from Spain," p. 115.

One of the natural consequences of adopting this method of threshing is, that the straw, through the rough treatment it meets with from the combined action of the teeth of the harrow, and the hoofs of the horses and oxen, is broken up into very small pieces, never exceeding two or three inches in length, so that really it is not available for many of the purposes to which it is applied in other countries. Let no traveller, therefore, unable to meet with a bed of the usual kind, and wishing to find a substitute, ever betake himself to that place, which in some parts of the world supplies a very

comfortable extemporized couch ready for all comers—the straw-loft—for in a Spanish *pajar* he will find himself surrounded by a bristling array of *spiculæ*, that will effectually banish sleep.

A portable steam-engine, for threshing out corn, might be safely recommended to enterprising capitalists, as a very profitable speculation in many parts of the Peninsula, where fuel is procurable.

As we journeyed along through some of the less interesting districts, I used to amuse myself, when there was nothing particular to engage attention, by remarking the various soils, and road-stains, with which the legs and flanks of horse, mule, and donkey were chequered. Each *posada* is supposed to have attached to it a man called *mozo de la cuadra*, an official corresponding to the ostler of an English inn. For the most part, however, his office is a decided sinecure. He will, it is true, if properly looked after, feed the animals placed under his care, and lead them to the nearest fountain for watering. Beyond these narrow limits his ideas of duty do not extend. As for rubbing down a horse, or combing out mane and tail, or, in short, paying any of those *petits soins* with which a good English

groom delights to make him comfortable after a hard day's work, such a notion never enters his head; and next morning your beast comes forth from the stable with his coat precisely in the same condition as when he entered it twelve hours before. Every soil and stain stands out *in statu quo*, while saddle and bridle present an appearance of mingled dirt and rust, that would send a respectable English ostler, with the smallest grain of professional feeling, into hysterics, *if anything would*. Indeed I used to indulge my imagination with the fancy that a geologist, well up in Iberian formations, might almost have made out our route through the various districts of the land, by a careful inspection of the different strata our horses' coats exhibited; and when we drew bridle in front of the *Fonda de Londres* at Seville, they carried upon hoof and leg specimens of most of the clays, and other soils, we had traversed during the previous three weeks in the provinces of Toledo, Estremadura, and Andalusia!

CHAPTER XLI.

AS we advanced to-day, December 8th, on our road towards Ronda, we learned to appreciate, with more and more thankfulness, our good fortune in having dry weather. Miles and miles of this route would have been utterly impracticable during rain, owing to the nature of the soil. We had, in particular, one steep ascent of nearly two miles over a bed of stiff clay, where every donkey must have "come to grief" had the day been wet, and we should thus have been brought to a stand-still in the midst of a very bleak, and almost houseless region. Even as it was, it cost Cordova, Moro, and the rest of the donkeys, whose names used to be so familiar, many a hard struggle, ere they achieved the ascent, to enter at the summit upon a sounder line of country.

Just before we halted for luncheon, Marcos, and his Cordova purchase, "the donkey of re-

spect," had a tremendous quarrel. For some reason, which to this day is enveloped in mystery, Marcos, who was on his back, could not induce him to go through a shallow brook, crossed by each of his brethren without boggle or difficulty before his very eyes. His rider applied the wonted argument of a stick with such vigour, that, in an Irishman's phrase, "it broke all to smithereens," leaving the donkey for the moment "master of the situation," an advantage he improved by throwing Marcos over his head amid screams of laughter from the rest of the party, and then galloping off to some distance from the scene of action. Caught with infinite trouble, the rebel was driven back to the ford by his still weaponless owner (for in this hedgeless country, sticks are not to be met with at every turn), and there a fresh trial of strength ensued, donkey pulling one way, Marcos another. This went on for several minutes, and just as I was going to canter back to his assistance, another vigorous effort had landed the recalcitrant beast on the right side of the water, and given victory where it was due, on the side of legitimate authority.

After passing Teba, the wayside abounded with clumps of iris in full flower, which were

not only very pretty to look at, as they gave colour and brightness to the bleak slopes of the mountain-path, and emitted a most fragrant perfume, but recalled many a home-scene far away over the sea.

In due course the mountain-ranges of the *Serrania de la Ronda* came into sight right ahead, glowing with the flaming hues of a superb sunset, that, according to Milton's fine phrase, " vaulted with fire " the whole horizon to the westward, and gave hopeful promise for the morrow.

A moonlight ride of some hours, however, still lay between us and Ronda, our destination for the night; and though occasionally some of the most long-sighted of the party caught a glimpse of the place, it was only to mock us by its seeming nearness for the moment, to recede, at a fresh turn of the road, to a greater distance (apparently) than ever.

This certainly is one of the trying circumstances of a riding-tour through Spain, though really proceeding from one of the good qualities of the climate, the wonderful transparency of the atmosphere, which to the eye almost annihilates distance, and brings remote objects within apparent proximity. At the end of a

long day's march, when food and rest have become objects of special interest both to man and beast (more particularly to the unfortunate donkeys, condemned to fast from morning to night), it is in no small degree tantalizing to have your destination pertinaciously thrust upon the sight for hours, during which, despite repeated experience, and many a secret resolution, you cannot help flattering yourself, that twenty minutes more will witness your arrival, when all the while you have at least two hours' travel still to accomplish. This was particularly the case, I well remember, the day we entered Seville, when we could distinctly make out, not only towers and churches, especially the Giralda and the Cathedral, but even single houses, hours before we actually arrived at the gates. This illusion occurs with most frequency in Andalusia, where the towns, as I have before remarked, are generally placed on the highest ground in the neighbourhood, and may be almost said to gleam with white-wash, which the Spaniards of the South apply to all their buildings in liberal profusion.

At length our cavalcade clattered through the streets of Ronda, to stop about the middle of the first street at one of the numerous posadas

with which the place abounds, prefacing our entrance, as usual, by that most necessary preliminary of making a bargain for accommodation, which specified the smallest particulars, *before dismounting* (for thus you negotiate with tenfold advantage), as soon as Purkiss had concluded his inspection of the premises.

Stern experience had long taught us the necessity of adopting this system of tactics, which to-day, as on many a previous occasion, soon repaid the trouble, nor was a single donkey unloaded at Ronda, till the host had reduced his demands by about one-half. Nowhere should travellers be more upon their guard ; for the inhabitants bear a very equivocal character, and a glance at the countenances of the master and mistress of the posada, convinced us they were perfectly up to the ways of the world, and thoroughly competent to take care of their own interests. This town used to be a grand centre of smuggling for the mountain-district, of which it is the capital, and from the nature of the country, and its proximity to Gibraltar, "Free Trade" was once a very feasible, and (in the estimation of the community at large) a highly respectable, and even virtuous, method of earning a livelihood. Nor in all the South of Spain

was there any spot, where travellers met with so much dancing, and strumming of guitars, so much liveliness and gaiety of manner, and picturesque splendour of costume, a few years ago, as in the neighbourhood of Ronda. Every second man you met was a *contrabandista*, while, as a very natural result, smuggling, in all its branches, was regarded by the public opinion of the district with as much favour, as along the coast of Cornwall, during the palmy days of the last century.

But now all is changed. Revenue-officers and the Guardia Civil have made smuggling a line of business that does not “pay,” and scores of people, who once were substantial housekeepers, know not, it is said, which way to turn for a meal. Their only resource is to plunder travellers, and, to do them justice, every opportunity for cheatery and extortion is zealously taken advantage of.

We had, it is true, by bargaining beforehand, cut them off from the widest field for the exercise of their craft, and any spoil they could hope to win from us, would be mere scraps and fragments of booty, compared with the chance offered by inexperienced travellers, not up to the ways of the country. Still cheatery is very

elastic, and turns up, when least expected, as we found next morning, Friday, December 9th.

Though unable to make any stay at Ronda, as we had once proposed until detained again and again upon the road, we still felt very anxious to see what we could of one of the most interesting spots in Spain; and several of its "lions" being quite close to the town, we set off betimes on Friday morning for that purpose. A young lad of fifteen offered himself as our guide, and never thinking it was necessary to make a regular bargain with so young a hand, we placed ourselves under his guidance in unsuspecting confidence. We were not away altogether more than an hour and a half, and our young friend, who certainly had been uncommonly amusing and lively, with a very cheerful flow of conversation that quite fascinated his audience, had the assurance to demand a dollar (4s. 2d.) for his services, and being the son of our host and hostess, invoked their intervention to support his claims when he found they were resisted, and a pretty scene we had in the kitchen before starting; though I am happy to say, that in spite of all the disturbance, and the air of deeply-injured innocence assumed by our cicerone, he succeeded in obtain-

ing no more than a fair remuneration for his services.

One characteristic of robbers, however, in such a country as Spain, commands admiration (to borrow copy-book phraseology)—they generally choose some romantic scene, amid the umbrageous recesses of a forest, or the rugged fastnesses of a mountain-region, for their lair. This is pre-eminently the case with the good people of Ronda. Nothing can be finer than the situation of the town, which has acquired an almost world-wide renown for beauty.

A long tract of table-land (as well as we could make out by moonlight the night before) terminates, with the abruptness of an ocean-cliff, in a precipice varying in height from 800 to 1000 feet. On this natural platform stands Ronda, and a single leap would carry you from the margin of its Alameda into the depths of an almost Alpine Valley, though the orange and olive, flourish there in rich luxuriance. The view from the bridge is perhaps still more wonderful. A chasm, 300 feet wide, called the *Tajo*, dividing the old town from the new, is spanned by a massive modern bridge, under which, at the depth of some 700 feet, the Guadalvin rushes forth into open day from the

caverns, which hitherto have imprisoned its waters, and then with a bold leap over a ledge of rock (that forms a lovely waterfall just where a narrow channel drains off an arrowy shoot to the old Moorish mills below), it dashes onward down the slope, until, having fertilized the green meadows of the valley, it finally empties itself into the principal stream of the district, the green-hued, and romantic Guadairo.

Descending to the mills, and standing at the base of the bridge, near the waterfall, we realized more distinctly the height and depth of that singular cleft, and as we turned in the opposite quarter, the effect was almost as if we were looking through the tube of some enormous telescope, so closely at this spot do the rocks contract into a gorge, before they finally open out towards the valley. The sides of the cliff are covered with festoons of creepers, looking so moist and fresh, that to descend in the summer-heats from the sun-baked town into those cool depths, where the spray of the waterfall, dropping unseen like gentle dew, maintains a perpetual freshness, must be a delicious transition. The spot forcibly recalled the imagery of Lord Mornington's well-known glee, "Here in cool grot," which indeed so exactly describes its

various features, that it might have been written there, though the fairies would have to adjourn to the meadows below ere they could "frisk it, frisk it," on "the turf with daisies broider'd o'er."

We saw it under circumstances widely different, with nothing to remind us of either fairy forms, or summer skies, the frosty air of a December morning, as well as the pressure of time, forbidding us to linger, and in another half-hour we were once more in the saddle, to descend the valley of the Guadairo.

CHAPTER XLII.

HARDLY had we cleared the town, before I discovered the loss of a very useful Spanish scarf, or *faja*, I had bought at Seville, which I distinctly remembered to have had in my possession that morning. It was, however, too late to go back, as, with a long journey before us, I did not wish to detain the party, and though it was doubtless at the posada, its recovery out of the hands of such gentry, more especially while the incident of the dollar was still so fresh in their recollection, would have been simply hopeless.

Judging from our own experience it is a very common practice with the women at posadas to conceal any article they may covet, belonging to travellers, by throwing something over it, in the hope that, on the principle of "out of sight, out of mind," its existence may be forgotten,

and so in the hurry of departure the guest probably goes away without thinking of it, and the *muchacha* (or waiting-maid) comes of course into possession of such waif, as a sort of residuary proprietor.

Tricks of this description were constantly played upon us; for, with the usual unsuspectingness of the masculine gender, we *could not* bring ourselves to believe, that *women* could be guilty of such practices! Indeed, I may say, a considerable time elapsed before we had fully fathomed the depths of female artifice in Spain; it seemed to meet us at every turn; no sooner had we discovered one "dodge," and turned the knowledge to account by greater circumspection of conduct, than a new manœuvre assailed us from a totally opposite quarter! It would take a long time to relate all we had to go through, and I should be unwilling to detain my readers with so painful a subject. One or two of their stratagems, however, may be mentioned for the benefit of future tourists.

A pair of comfortable winter-gloves, which our long rides, early and late, rendered worth more than their weight in silver, would chance to be lying on the bed before breakfast, ready for the day's wear; or a pocket-handkerchief, or

trusty knife, a companion in travel for years, or small hair-brush, or any of the sundry knick-knacks so convenient to travellers. On returning to your room to finish packing, something (and that of course precisely the article most frequently in request) was sure to have disappeared. If lucky enough to recollect its existence, and sufficiently alive to Spanish stratagem, you would, almost to a certainty, find your missing chattel lying in a fold of the bed-clothes, carelessly, yet artistically, concealed. The obvious advantage of the trick over downright positive thieving, consisted in the impossibility of bringing home the offence, while it proved, in most instances, an equally effectual method of conveying property from one owner to another. It was nearly as certain in its results as actual stealing, and much more safe, by compromising no one.

So it happened, no doubt, to my missing faja. I had carefully put it out with my paletot, &c., before we set off to see the sights of Ronda, so as to be quite ready for use on my return. During my absence the maid-servant had, of course, taken the opportunity of reconnoitring my room to see which of my goods and chattels would serve her best. The faja, with its gay

colours so dear to the female heart, was the very thing to suit her complexion ! Besides, she may have had strict notions about clerical costume, and perhaps thought I had no business to array myself in the pomp and vanity of a scarlet scarf. At any rate, without removing it, I dare say, many inches from its former position, she managed to conceal it so effectually that I never saw it again, and I can only now wish her health and strength to wear my faja from Seville !

Sometimes bolder methods are adopted, and I have had the pocket of my paletot, lying in my bed-room, picked, while I chanced to be out of sight. I mention these various particulars not only to illustrate the character of a class with which travellers must unavoidably come into frequent contact, but because, moreover, the very articles most needed on a journey are sure to be most in request with posada-keepers ; not to mention the additional fact that Spanish travel soon teaches the value of the little appliances and comforts Englishmen are wont to carry about with them, in a land where it is utterly impossible to replace such conveniences.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HAVING achieved in safety the stony descent from high-perched Ronda, we soon reached the banks of the Guadairo, and fording its crystal stream, followed a road skirting its right bank for a considerable distance.

A more charming companion for a ride cannot be imagined than this bright mountain-river, as it sped along swiftly, but gently, through some of the loveliest scenery we saw anywhere in the Peninsula. Of quite a distinct character from anything we fell in with elsewhere, it reminded me, in many places, of scenery among the Wicklow mountains, with the addition of Spanish accessories, and the more varied and choice vegetation of a southern climate.

Ford mentions a route from Ronda to Gibraltar, which avoids Gaucin, leaving it about three miles to the left. This route we were anxious to follow for several reasons; but chiefly

because it appeared, from Ford's description, to be a shorter and better way to "the Rock," than the one by Gaucin, and some of our animals were beginning to show symptoms of fatigue, which made it desirable to choose the easier line.

Next day we enjoyed the satisfaction of learning that, apart from facility of travelling, the direction we were now following was far preferable in point of scenery also, to the road through Gaucin.

Our course lay between a double mountain-range, which, clothed with many a southern shrub—oleander, myrtle, arbutus, gum-cistus, and Spanish gorse—declined in gentle slopes to the water's edge. Here and there, when an occasional tract of level ground gave room for man to build his home, the wilder features were for the moment softened down, and orange-groves, almond and olive trees, imparted a variety to the landscape.

About two leagues from Ronda, on the opposite bank of the river, we passed *La Cueva del Gato* (the Cat's Cave), a celebrated cavern, lying at the base of the mountain, out of which leaps forth a full-grown stream, which at once doubles the volume of the Guadairo, by the influx of its

sea-green waters. A lovelier spot cannot be conceived. How I longed to cross the river (for we had now for some time returned to the left bank) and explore the hidden beauties of its "untrodden stalactical caverns"! But the day was wearing on, and having no guide, we could command no reliable information respecting our route, which was evidently, from what we saw before us, by no means a desirable road to travel over in the night-time. It was seldom better than a narrow mule-path, sometimes skirting, by a mere ledge, the precipices overhanging the river, sometimes descending abruptly into the bed of ravine or torrent, to ascend as steep a slope on the other side. Nor was it always an easy matter to pass, at such points, the numerous trains of mules and donkeys we fell in with between Ronda and La Himerá. Some of them, going in the same direction, with little regard to civility or safety, would try to pass us, and push ahead. At another time, perhaps, we might have resented such rudeness, so different from the general demeanour of the different wayfarers we had fallen in with heretofore. But we were now too much absorbed in the loveliness around us, and too fearful of losing any portion, to think of anything else, while every bend of the

river enchanted the eye by disclosing some new beauty.

Every now and then the Guadairo opened out between craggy banks of brown copse-wood into tranquil reaches, that mirrored the cloudless sky, and caught some tinge of its deep azure ; those quiet breadths of still water, where swarms of fish were glancing to and fro, contrasting most effectively by their repose, with the rushing mill-race that borrowed from, or the tributary mountain-brook that added to, the volume of the main stream.

Sometimes the entire landscape became a broad sweep of woodland, all-gorgeous with the tints of autumn, and the eye catching every moment some new effulgence of colouring, here a mass of scarlet and gold, there a dark rich green, or mellow brown, travelled onwards with delight, to rest finally on some bold crag or wooded promontory, which thrusting itself beyond the general line of mountain-slope, and forcing the river out of a direct course, quickened it into speedier flow over rocky ledge and gravelly ford.

Having forded the Guadairo on first descending from Ronda, we crossed again ere noon, keeping always afterwards to the left bank. By

this time it had attained the dimensions of a goodly stream, and though many a mill was indebted to those crystal waters for the means of setting in motion the rude machinery, which had remained almost unchanged since Moorish days, the loan was soon repaid, and as the foaming runnel leapt out of the mill-slalice to regain the parent-stream, the Guadairo flowed on, not as is the wont of Spanish rivers (each of which is generally laid under tribute for the purposes of irrigation, and robbed, or, according to the national expression *sangrado*, bled, of half its current), but with undiminished, and ever-enlarging volume.

About two or three o'clock, we made a brief halt beside one of the old-fashioned mills, under the shade of spreading walnut-trees, while the horses ate their mid-day allowance of barley, and, hastening onwards again to make up for the lateness of our start, reached in a couple of hours a solitary Venta surrounded by orange-trees, just before sunset. The river is here crossed by a ferry, intended for the convenience of persons going to Cortes, one of the largest villages in the neighbourhood.

It was now time to be thinking of night-quarters, and having heard of a hamlet in this

direction, called La Himera, we inquired of the people, to whom both the Venta and ferry belonged. La Himera, they told us, was about a mile and a half distant on that side of the river; but naturally desirous to take in so large a party, they used their best powers of persuasion to convince us we should be much better off under the roof of the Venta than if we went on further. Being decidedly sceptical on this point, as the whole premises appeared to contain no more than two rooms, and these on the ground-floor, like most Spanish houses of ordinary description, we declined their invitation (at any rate for the present, until we had made a reconnaissance), and diverging from the bridle-road about half a mile below, were not long in reaching La Himera, which in its breezy position, upon a steep brow under a range of high hills, had a far drier and healthier aspect than that damp and squalid Venta, close to the water's edge, suggestive of nothing but mosquitos, malaria, and low fever.

La Himera, which is large enough to aspire to the title of a village, possesses a posada, whither of course we betook ourselves, only, however, to meet with disappointment, the mistress of the house being too ill to admit of our being taken

in there. Purkiss, in consequence, had to go about from door to door, like a mendicant, begging for accommodation; and after trying several houses in vain, at last, when we had begun to fear we should after all have to return to the Venta, he discovered one that would do. It belonged to some peasants, of whom indeed the entire population of this sequestered community is composed, there being in the place not even a resident Cura.

Our host, and hostess-elect, were most civil and obliging, and having a very tidy chamber containing two beds, in addition to another room at the house of a relation "up the street," where Mr. Sykes found comfortable quarters, they were thus able to accommodate the whole party, though I fear this result was not accomplished without much inconvenience to themselves and their families.

We could not have found a better illustration of the superior comfort and cleanliness in which the Spanish peasantry live, than what occurred on the present occasion. *La Himera*, as already stated, is a small mountain-village, in a remote district, while the only road we saw within several miles of the place, lies at some distance out of sight, and is little frequented by travellers

of any description. Yet here, in the house of a common peasant, we met with unimpeachable accommodation, and far better beds than may sometimes be found at inns of considerable pretension.

The preparation of dinner became quite a public affair, for there was but one fire-place, and between our party of nine, the household, and sundry neighbours, who came dropping in, some to assist, and all to have a peep at the *Señores Ingleses*, Purkiss had much ado to get to the hearth, though he bore the trial with his usual good-temper. The village-barber, a poor lame young man, particularly distinguished himself by his activity and general usefulness, turning his hand to anything, skinning rabbits, washing, and then slicing potatoes, and holding the frying-pan, with such ready cheerfulness, that it was quite a pleasure to see him.

There was also a very tall woman, looking like a domesticated Meg Merrilies, who professed to be making herself generally useful; but from the eccentricity of her behaviour she rendered, in reality, very little service, though we gave her full credit for the best intentions. I do not know how many times she patted, nay I may well say, slapped me on the back, exhibit-

ing all the while so benevolent an expression of countenance, that offence, or even remonstrance, was out of the question; it was her way of manifesting regard and affection! After this she proceeded to offer her services to Purkiss, to his sore embarrassment, doing always the very thing he particularly wished not to be done. This was too provoking, as delaying still further the preparation of dinner, which under the most favourable circumstances could seldom be accomplished in a shorter space than two hours. The old lady's last freak took place several hours after dinner, when she entered our bed-room, almost perforce, with a large apple in each hand, one of which she persisted in poking under Lord Portarlington's bed-clothes, awakening him out of his first sleep, while she presented the other to me. Fortunately I was still dressed, and with many thanks for her unseasonable gifts, which eventually, however, stood us in good stead, I managed by degrees to get her out of the room.

Despite all difficulties, Purkiss in due course contrived to serve us up a very superior dinner, which we ate in the bed-room, returning to the kitchen as soon as the servants had finished their meal, and a merry group we formed round

the fire-side, while Marcos, Tomas, the Barber, and the man from Loja, were discussing, a little apart, the remains of our dinner, out of which, by the addition of a few handfuls of rice, supplemented with various items of native seasoning, they soon concocted a huge dish of food, that looked quite appetizing. Into this each of them dipped his broad *navaja*, or clasp-knife, after the Spanish fashion, and it was astonishing how speedily the whole mess disappeared, as they quaffed two or three bottles of wine we had given them, amid a chorus of jest and laughter.

The Barber delighted us with his good-natured, pleasant ways. Being the handy man of the village, he is at every one's call on emergencies, practising among his various avocations blood-letting both in arm and foot, as he took care to inform us, like the barber-surgeons of our own country a couple of centuries ago. This art he evidently regarded as the most honourable department of his profession. He was very anxious to exercise some branch of his calling upon one of us ; and first proposed letting a little blood, of which the meagreness of Spanish diet had left us no superfluity ; and when we, not unnaturally, declined the proposal, he begged at

any rate we would permit him to exhibit his tonsorial skill, an offer that met with no better acceptance from any of the party.

Thoroughly did we enjoy that evening at La Himera, not only because the people were so exceedingly kind-hearted and obliging, and we saw them very much as they are at their own fire-sides ; but we felt, moreover, it was perhaps the last scene of the sort we should ever witness, now we were drawing so near the end of our expedition. I often look back to the night we spent at La Himera, with a feeling of peculiar pleasure.

CHAPTER XLIV.

WITH a day's journey of unknown length in prospect, we were called next morning before six, having enjoyed an excellent night's rest in clean, comfortable beds; though the servants, who went through a great amount of fatigue and discomfort during the whole expedition with most praiseworthy patience and good-humour, had, as often happened, nothing but the floor to lie upon. When I first went out into the open air, it was still glorious moonlight, with a solitary fire of charcoal-burners glowing on the hill-side opposite, like the flaming eye of a Cyclops, while over mountain and valley, woodland and river, the calmness of perfect repose shed its soothing influence.

Tomas, whom by this time we had discovered to be a thoroughly lazy fellow, very different from Marcos, would not get up when first called, and thus delayed us provokingly, at least an hour, so that in spite of our virtuous exertions

in quitting bed long before daylight, we did not succeed in making an earlier start than 7.30.

Having now to regain the main road, from which we had diverged to reach La Himera, the good-natured Barber, though very lame (apparently from his birth), volunteered to guide us, and led the way with right good will. We traversed about two miles of rough ground before we regained the road, not where we left it the preceding day, but some distance lower down the valley, high above the Guadaïro, with Cortes over against us on the opposite bank. Here we parted from the Barber, and wishing us good-bye with hearty kindliness, he turned homewards, supremely happy in the possession of his well-merited earnings, while we set our faces down the river in the direction of Boca de Leon, a point for which he had given us careful and oft-repeated directions.

While debating the evening before, whither we should betake ourselves for sleeping-quarters, we had entertained some thoughts of making for Cortes, fancying it was no great distance ahead. We could now perceive, as we approached that village, how much more wisely we had acted in going to La Himera, Cortes being not only on the wrong side of the Guadaïro (and it takes

some time for a party like ours to cross a Spanish ferry, with its clumsy boat and dilatory boatmen), but, as was very evident when we stood opposite, really much further off than it appeared. Its situation is most charming, especially when viewed from below, as we saw it basking in the morning sunbeams, half-way up the mountain, and combining, on that sheltered plateau, the double advantage of a warm climate and fresh highland breezes.

The Guadairo, which we still skirted for several hours, led us to-day through scenery of a different description from the landscapes with which it had made us familiar yesterday. Its banks were much less uniform, sloping at one time down to the water's edge in a strip of green meadow, fenced by aloe-hedges, at another swelling into rounded headlands of some elevation, that overhung the stream in precipices of rich brown soil; and, as our path wound in and out between groups of lichen-clad oak-stems, river and meadow, woodland and mountain-glen, would burst suddenly into sight, presenting a combination of beauty, which united in a single view both the features of English forest-scenery, and many of the characteristics of a Spanish landscape.

About mid-day we finally quitted our now familiar companion, the Guadairo, which we had skirted for a day and a half. But before I bid farewell to its romantic scenery, let me point out, under correction of philologists, who are very apt to be "down" upon any unlicensed intruder into their domain, the frequent occurrence, in the South of Spain, of the first word which enters into the composition of its name.

A very cursory glance at the map will discover at least twenty streams, including the two great arteries of the district, the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir, in addition to a third almost identical in name, the Guadaira near Seville, all of which begin with the same prefix. This an ignoramus like myself, would derive from *Wada*, the Arabic term for a river, the well-known "Wady" of the East being, I presume, a cognate word. The pronunciation too would seem to favour this crude surmise of mine, each of those names being pronounced as if it began with a *W*, *G* being here ignominiously disregarded, as non-existent. Words so compounded are found, as might be expected, with very rare exceptions (Guadarrama near Madrid being the principal), in those parts of Spain alone, where Moorish ascendancy was of longest duration.

CHAPTER XLV.

QUITTING then the river and philology, at once, we strike abruptly to the left, on crossing a torrent, and for a few miles follow the road to Gaucin, of which town, perched like an eyrie among the mountains, we catch a glimpse on reaching the ridge of a rough, half-ploughed hill, our proximate destination, according to the reiterated instructions of that faithfully the Barber, being Boca de Leon, a spot of which we had formed the most indistinct conceptions, not knowing exactly whether it was hamlet, venta, or mountain-pass. From the ridge on which we now stood, we could make out the route for some distance, as we looked down upon a copse-clad glen, watered by a small brook, with Gaucin to our left. Descending about half the depth of the glen, and following a path which ran, terrace-like, high above the brook, we threaded two or three miles of the

most beautiful woodland scenery imaginable, arriving in due season at a solitary cottage, standing in a vineyard, just where the valley makes an abrupt bend at right angles to its former direction.

Here we pulled up to take counsel. Two paths presented themselves, one proceeding straight down to the brook, to ascend on the other side a steep slope of well-timbered ground that almost deserved to be called a mountain. The other turning to the right, past the cottage, led on to a gorge of singular beauty, hemmed-in by lofty cliffs of rich brown soil, through which the brook made its way to join the Guadairo. There being no one in the cottage to give us information, we naturally chose the easier and pleasanter course, where the path was level, and the scenery most inviting, having no mind to face that long pull up-hill, to which the other route would have condemned us.

How far we should have gone on in our error (as it turned out), it is impossible to say; some peasants fortunately were at work further on, and from them we learnt, that Boca de Leon was that very slope of woodland on the other side of the brook, which we had just declined to encounter. Turning back we regained the right

road, and after a laborious ascent (through groves of magnificent chestnuts), which proved most fatiguing to the horses, the day being very warm and sunshiny, we gained at length the summit of the pass, to descend abruptly on the other side by a long tract of bleak wold. A sudden bend of the path turning our eyes in another direction, what should we see, to our intense satisfaction, but the goal of our journey, and the object of our hopes,—the Rock of Gibraltar! which, looming grandly through the hazy atmosphere far away to the south-east, lifted its vast form, towering in solitary majesty, with proud defiance against the African coast.

It was a moment of delighted surprise; and, in spite of the haze and dimness caused by the east wind, the grandeur of its form and outline more than realized our expectations. Apart from its history, and all the associations called forth in the minds of Englishmen sighting it for the first time, I have seldom seen a finer natural object, its position on the dead level of the sea-shore rendering effective every foot of elevation.

We were, however, evidently still a long way off, and as the day began to draw to a close, it was impossible to say when we should be able to ac-

comply with the intervening space, a distance (apparently) of some twenty-five or thirty miles. The road too, along those upland pastures, was villanous, being at once boggy, and stony, threatening at one moment to break our horses' knees, at another to engulf them in some very suspicious-looking swamps, among which we had for the time to pick our way with extreme caution. This was the only occasion I remember ever to have met with anything of the kind in Spain, bogs being a formation quite foreign to that arid climate. As we advanced towards the lower country the ground gradually became sounder and less toilsome to the horses.

Just at this moment Mr. Sykes and I happened to have ridden on ahead, and on reaching a venta standing in a grove of noble orange-trees (the loftiest and largest I ever saw), covered to their topmost bough with ripe fruit, we waited for the rest of the party. A very extensive prospect lay before us in the direction of Gibraltar, and we were in full enjoyment of the scene, when, suddenly chancing to look back upon the road we had been travelling, great was my astonishment to behold a Skye-terrier shuffling along on three legs at a quick trot towards us, and looking as natural and in-

dependent as if his shaggy species belonged to the *indigenæ* of the Peninsula; one's thoughts being instantly carried homeward by a sight so unexpected in that out-of-the-way spot! And while, like the flies in amber, its appearance prompted us to think of the lines—

“Not that the thing itself was rich, or rare,
But we wondered how on earth it had come there!”—

the mystery was solved by the approach of two horsemen, unmistakable English gentlemen, with their servant behind, coming from the same quarter. In the pleasure of meeting countrymen, and exchanging a few words, the rigour and stiffness of English etiquette was at once cast aside, and we spoke as naturally as ships hail each other at sea.

They, like ourselves, were bound for Gibraltar, having left it only three days before, for a short excursion through the Serrania. They had started from Ronda that morning, and being in light marching order, and well mounted on Gibraltar hacks, which are supposed capable of any amount of exertion under English riders, had accomplished in one day what had occupied us nearly twice the time. They were now making for Ximena, the only place of any size

n the neighbourhood, where they had secured sleeping-quarters, and, as they hoped to arrive shortly, very good-naturedly offered to bespeak accommodation for us. We could not, however, avail ourselves of their kindness, our destination being San Roque. These gentlemen proved, as we learnt at Gibraltar, to be Captain O'Hara, and a friend, whose name I cannot at this moment recollect. Before parting, their servant a guide from "the Rock," thoroughly acquainted with the country, gave us full instructions as to our route, which proved of the greatest use. Indeed I do not know what we should have done but for that chance rencontre, for we had no guide, and not one of the party had ever been that way before.

Day was now rapidly closing, and in spite of the directions we had so recently received, it soon became no easy matter to find the road, which lay sometimes over a tract of arable ground, where the plough had newly obliterated every vestige of a path; sometimes it skirted the steep banks of a rivulet on its way, like ourselves, to the Guadairo, which we had just discovered we must ford once more. Under the deepening twilight it became scarcely less difficult to trace than an Indian trail, obliging us

continually to make casts in every direction, before we could venture to proceed, more especially on one occasion in crossing the brook. The moon, however, came ere long to our aid, and for some time we advanced at a good brisk pace, and had fairly reached the low country, when suddenly we found ourselves so hopelessly involved in a succession of ploughed fields, deep with stiff clay, that seeing a small farm-house standing at no great distance on a bank, I rode towards it, and with Purkiss' help as interpreter, prevailed on a young man to guide us to the Venta de Guadairo. Mounting his mule he struck off at once across a trackless sweep of wheat-land, where none but a native could find his way at night, and in about an hour and a half brought us to a ford of the Guadairo, at which one of the mules made a difficulty, and it was some time before he could be got over, though the water was not more than two feet deep. Following the right bank of the downward stream, in another hour we reached the Venta, which stands in a most dismal situation not far from the river-brink, in an atmosphere where damp, fog, and malaria reign in undisputed supremacy.

I had always felt a sort of presentiment, that although we had experienced a good many vicis-

situdes of travel, and, in Ford's phrase, declined quite as many moods and tenses of the verb "to rough it," as served to give zest to our adventures at the moment, and a piquancy to their after-recollection, yet there was still awaiting us somewhere, a culminating point of the ups-and-downs of a traveller's career in this quaint old-fashioned land, and a still lower deep of discomfort, ere our expedition came to a close.

At the Venta de Guadairo we found the complete fulfilment of that presentiment. For here were we, six hungry men, at the hour of nine P.M., under the roof of the most deplorable-looking abode imaginable, with just enough of food and wine to excite our appetites to an insatiable degree, after a ride of fourteen hours through fresh mountain-air! Nor was there the remotest chance of adding anything to the slender store we had brought with us, except a few eggs, which we hailed with rapture, and divided with as scrupulous an exactness as a shipwrecked crew doles out its scanty supplies.

But it may be asked, "Where were the pan-niers, of which we have heard so much, with their manifold resources of wine and comestibles?" That was precisely the question we had been putting to ourselves, and to each other,

so many times for several hours past, without eliciting the smallest response ; no, not even the friendly echo, which is supposed to be always at hand, in moments of extremity, to furnish a reply, when nothing else will. The fact is (can the reader wonder I am loth to make the confession?), we had been guilty that day of a gross indiscretion, the grossest indeed, I think, committed during the whole expedition—we had actually parted with our victuals !

The prospect of finding ourselves so soon under the protection of that redoubtable quadruped, the British Lion, at Gibraltar, had, apparently, proved too much for us. Like the Kamtchadales, as I once heard them described by a lecturer at the Great Globe, we had suddenly become, “without any regard for futurity,” elevated by the excitement of the moment far above the sublunary concerns of eating and drinking. Forgetful of the old saw, “Mass and meat never hinder work,” we had fancied to-day, for the first time, that the provisions were an incumbrance, mere impediments to our speedier progress, and so, after a hasty meal taken in the forenoon, we at once pushed on, leaving Marcos, Tomas, and the man from Loja, to come on after us with the donkeys to San Roque, as

speedily as possible, flattering ourselves we were, somehow or other, going to enter Gibraltar that very night, at gun-fire, when the gates are closed, being in December soon after five P.M.

Some one fortunately had possessed sufficient "regard for futurity," to put up a fowl, and half another, of very slender dimensions, with the remains of a bottle of sherry, and to this forethought did we owe the pittance of food we were now swallowing with so much thankfulness, and still unappeased hunger, at the Venta de Guadairo.

As soon as the sherry had disappeared, we tried for the first time that vile stuff, *aguardiente*, which, being in taste worse than any physic, did us, I hope, some good afterwards.

The apples, presented the previous night in so eccentric a manner by the old lady at La Himera, and which we then regarded as so unseasonable a gift, were now more esteemed than golden fruit of the Hesperides (who, by-the-way, must have lived somewhere in these parts, "the Far West" of classic ages), while we watched each of us his own individual apple roasting in the fire, with most jealous concern, and so eager was our hunger, that I believe all three burnt their mouths in eating them. At any rate I did.

Beds in such a place were utterly out of the question. For any one wishing to lie down, there was the floor and a sort of settle, without a back, attached to the wall round the fire, on which the rest of the party contrived to snatch a sedentary nap, while I, unable to sleep, had to content myself with listening to the peculiar sounds uttered by somnolent humanity, an entertainment which a musician might haply, in this instance, describe as a quintett, with an obligato accompaniment by one or two performers on the only instrument available at the moment—the nasal organ.

This concerted piece lasted perhaps an hour and a half, giving me ample time “to chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancies,” the latter inspired no doubt by *aguardiente*. Will any one wonder that on the first opportunity I should propose to go on all night, now that men and horses were refreshed with rest and food, and there was a full moon at our service, so that we might reach Gibraltar betimes next morning, instead of having to ride, soiled and travel-worn, through the streets of a British garrison-town by broad day-light on Sunday? It was now between eleven and twelve, and we might easily arrive soon after morning gun-fire.

No sooner said than done; every one was willing, and in a short time we were once more on horseback, taking the landlord of the Venta for our guide. The horses were wonderfully fresh, considering the distance we had travelled, and mine was ready, as usual, to kick up behind on every occasion. It will easily be imagined we were not at that moment a very lively party, and I had become so very sleepy, I could with difficulty keep the saddle. For some time it was a most dismal ride, while our course lay along a dank, muddy valley, and as we penetrated the dense body of fog extending in all directions, it seemed as if a curtain were drawn between us and the moon, deadening all her brilliancy, and chilling mind and body alike.

After fording a stream of some depth, we came out upon a pleasanter line of country, and at length found ourselves on a tract of dry sand, just before entering the celebrated "Cork Wood," which we saw as few travellers have seen it—amid the profound silence and solemnity of midnight, with floods of chequered moonlight streaming through its long-drawn avenues, which at the moment appeared like the realms of Dream-land, while, as the horse-hoofs fell with noiseless pace on the fine pow-

dery sand, our party might have been taken for a cavalcade of ghosts.

My horse being at all times an unpleasant neighbour, I rode a little ahead, and in my then dreamy state, "'twixt sleeping and waking," it seemed the most natural thing in the world to look any moment for the ghostly form of by-gone Moor, or Spaniard, issuing from the depths of the forest, to challenge us on our night-march, as intruders on their shadowy domain.

Nothing, however, ghostly or bodily, Christian or Paynim, did we encounter through all that long reach of forest-glades, stretching out, so it seemed to us, some ten or twelve miles; nor did even a scudding rabbit, or stealthy fox, once cross our path. The solitude was absolute. No living thing, besides ourselves, was in motion, in thicket or glade, and that strange, midnight, ride of December the 11th (for we now had just passed "the hour, of night's black arch the key-stone"), became a fitting conclusion to our various wanderings through the *dehesas*, and *despoblados* of Spain's most solitary wilds, being itself the most silent and solitary of them all.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ON approaching San Roque we began to meet parties of muleteers on the road, even at that early hour, and as we were going to, not from, the coast, and could not consequently be smugglers, our cavalcade of seven must have excited some surprise, as was indicated indeed by the tone with which they replied to our greetings.

While riding through the silent streets, we espied a café already open, and the proprietor (concluding, I suppose, that none but Britons could be going about at such an hour) called out to us, in foreign English, that he had some coffee "all hot," an announcement which fell upon the ear like pleasant music, and, as we could not enter "the Rock" before gun-fire, we once more dismounted, to feed the horses, and regale ourselves with coffee and bread-and-butter.

Scarce had the first glow of dawn streaked the East, when with a BANG! forth bellowed old

England's thunder, and while the boom reverberated among the fortress-caverns of "the Rock," coming out again and again in multiplied echoes across the Lines, till the houses of San Roque trembled in unison, it sounded to our ears like a welcome, homeward, call.

We had now only about three miles to go, and while "the Rock" loomed in shadowy grandeur out of the grey dawn, we began to realize those mingled sensations which crowd upon the mind, when regarding the close of such an expedition as we now had so nearly accomplished. It has been truly said, it is always painful to do anything, consciously, for the last time. We had so thoroughly enjoyed every portion of our riding-tour, a distance, as far as I have been able to make out by careful calculation, of about 800 miles from the time we started from Toledo, that it was impossible to contemplate its termination without feelings of liveliest regret; though no doubt they were considerably blunted, at the moment, by the fatigue of this last ride, which, including our three halts, had now extended over some twenty-five successive hours.

Still, on the other hand, had we not very great cause to be thankful, as I trust we all

were ? We had accomplished most successfully, without sickness or accident, an expedition, which we, at any rate, reckoned a considerable achievement, the illness and death of poor Barbarossa being the sole misfortune befalling the party, from beginning to end. We had been able to carry out in all its details, except the *détour* to Alcantara, the plan originally sketched before starting ; had been favoured on the whole (considering the lateness of the season) with excellent weather, and had seen most of the objects situated on our route to peculiar advantage. It was something, we felt, to have become acquainted with one of the most remarkable, and least travelled, countries in the world, not merely along its highways, or through the windows of a diligence, but in some of its most remote and unvisited regions, under the broad sky, in the fresh open air, moving when we chose, and where we chose. This plan of travelling had brought us into contact with every class of the people, except the highest, more especially with the peasantry, the very bone and sinew of Spain's body politic, and (according to the convictions of foreigners well acquainted with the country) the best hope and promise for her future. We had witnessed Spanish life in not a few of its

phases, had been received as guests, both in private dwellings, and in houses of public entertainment, visiting not only cities and towns renowned in the history of mankind, but unheard-of villages also, and sequestered country-towns, where foreigners are almost unknown.

Upon all this it was very pleasant to look back, as we rode onwards between hedges of towering aloe, in the sunshine of early morning, or skirted the waves, which rippled gently upon the shore of Algesiras Bay; while the superb panorama, encircling "the Rock," which extends from the snowy crest of the Sierra Nevada on the one hand, to the lurid fastnesses of the African mountains on the other, spread out before the eye a spectacle of such beauty and interest, as can hardly, perhaps, find its parallel in any part of the world, where earth and sea, mountain and lowland, fleet and fortress, citadel and harbour, crowded town and straggling village, present themselves to the view in bright and rapid succession.

It was nine o'clock on Sunday morning, December the 11th, and Church-Parade for the troops under canvas had just concluded, as we rode through the streets of Gibraltar,—thronged, even then, with market-people, and camp-follow-

ers, who suspended for a moment their buying and selling, to stare at so strange-looking a company as we must, doubtless, have appeared after our long ride,—and alighted at the Victoria, glad indeed to find ourselves once more under the roof of a comfortable Hotel.

CHAPTER XLVII.

OH! the delight of opening a budget of letters, after an interval of nearly two months passed in drear ignorance of home, and its beloved inmates! In travelling, it is always a difficulty to arrange about one's letters when the route cannot be determined beforehand, as was the case with us. This difficulty is greatly increased in Spain by its lack of railways, and remoteness from the chief lines of European traffic, not to mention the fact, that even from the southernmost districts of Andalusia, letters for England are invariably sent up to Madrid by *correo* (the mail of the Peninsula), a plan which, though highly profitable to the national exchequer, adds immensely to the time necessary for their transmission. Besides, our route having remained undetermined until we had quitted Madrid, it became impossible for me to make arrangements for hearing from home, either at Seville or Cor-

dova. Thus it came to pass, that an interval of seventy-five days elapsed between the date of the letter I last received (at Madrid), and the hour when, to my delight and happiness, I found no fewer than five awaiting my arrival at Gibraltar, every one of them being, thank God! a messenger of good tidings.

With my mind thus relieved from suspense and anxiety on that most important subject, it was high time to think of paying some attention to personal appearance, which certainly, on my first entering the hotel, did not, in many essential particulars, come up to the ideas commonly received among English gentlemen, whether lay or clerical. At that moment a more unkempt, neglected figure could not easily be found, nor would I for much have been seen, as I then appeared, by the most lowly of my parishioners, one of whom, a private in the 4th Foot, stationed at Gibraltar, had for several weeks been on the look-out for my arrival, so that an incident, so seemingly improbable, had become a very likely contingency.

But here we were again confronted by the consequences of yesterday's indiscretion. The most necessary part of our baggage was with Marcos, and Tomas, wherever that might be, far away

from where it was most wanted. Fortunately we had sent all the weightier luggage direct from Seville to Gibraltar, and having duly reached its destination, it was now available for our use. But in spite of all the appliances for the toilette supplied from that quarter, we were still destitute of several articles considered indispensable, on Sundays especially. For instance, however irreproachable the rest of his costume may be, it is a most damaging fact to a clergyman's respectability, if indeed it does not vitiate his whole moral character, to have to go about on that day among troops of his countrymen, with nothing better on his head, than a very shabby old wide-awake.

Such was precisely the predicament in which I found myself at Gibraltar, on Sunday, December 11th, 1859. I had somewhere or other, with the rest of the missing baggage, one of those head-coverings, modelled after the fashion of a chimney-pot, which form so important an item in an Englishman's most correct costume. Unhappily, like many other things in this world, it was not forthcoming when most wanted; and as I desired to go to church in the afternoon, I had nothing better to put on than the battered head-gear above mentioned, which, though still

in all substantial respects a most valuable travelling companion, exhibited some objectionable points, that did not exactly recommend its adoption for Sunday-wear. Originally black, the vicissitudes of travel had converted it into a neutral tint, where sun-burnt patches of brown, and many a road-stain of dust washed in by copious showers, strove for pre-eminence over the primary colour, in which it had come forth from the maker's hands. I found it a very trying exercise of moral courage to walk about the streets that day in so shockingly bad a hat; and it argued, methought, no small amount of friendship in Mr. Sykes to be willing to bear me company, while we sought in vain for a church open for afternoon service.

We tried the Cathedral. Memories of Toledo, and Seville! what *a* THING to dignify with that august title, suggestive of so much grandeur, solemnity, and reverential awe! Surely there can hardly be in Bath, Brighton, or Cheltenham, no, nor yet in London itself, a proprietary chapel even, that would not blush to see the building, where the first English Bishop of Gibraltar is supposed to have set up his episcopal throne! No wonder the bishop does not live there! And as if it were not anomaly enough to designate

such a tabernacle by the same name as the glorious fanes of Canterbury, and York, Salisbury, and Ely, the builder (*architect* I cannot call him), has crowned his work with an apex of absurdity, by selecting of all others the *Moorish* style—the style of the arch-enemies of the Cross—to be the exponent of his ideas on the subject of Christian worship, as if England could supply no examples of what a church ought to be!!

After beholding such temples to the Most High, as the Cathedrals of Burgos, Toledo, and Seville, it makes one, as an Englishman, absolutely ashamed to stand by the shabby, mean, dwarf-sized edifice, erected by our countrymen beneath the shadow of that rock, where *millions* have been spent ungrudgingly upon batteries and fortifications. Although enjoying the privilege of a purer faith than any professed throughout the Peninsula, yet here in the eye of Spaniard, Moor, and Jew, we content ourselves with a building, which none of those religionists (did they possess our national wealth) would ever presume to dedicate to God, *as the best he could offer*, as we may well believe from what we actually know of their various places of worship! One of the first consequences resulting from such misplaced economy, is that

a large proportion of our troops, if not all indeed, are compelled to celebrate Divine Worship in the open air, as we saw that morning when riding past the camp, an expedient that need not be resorted to, were a real Cathedral, at once worthy (as far as may be) of its high purpose, and of the nation from which it proceeds, to be erected on some suitable site, where the worship of the Church of England might be solemnized with all "the beauty of holiness," so as at the same time to provide for the spiritual necessities of our own people, and, by the solemnity and becomingness of our devotions, to prove in that thoroughfare of nations, to the whole world, Christian, Hebrew, and Infidel, that "God is in us of a truth."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MONDAY morning's dawn saw the welcome arrival of the muleteers, with all our goods and chattels, an event, that immediately restored our party to society, in which we had hitherto felt ourselves to be occupying a very equivocal position. Like us, Marcos and Tomas too had met with adventures on the road, having spent Saturday night, *à la belle étoile*, on the uplands where we enjoyed our first view of Gibraltar; donkeys, and men finding a chilly welcome that December night on those dreary heights, houseless, and unsheltered even by a hedge, being all the time (as to their chagrin they afterwards discovered) within a mile of the Venta, where Captain O'Hara, and his friend had overtaken us a few hours before. As the panniers contained (they knew) an ample supply of provisions, the trio very sensibly helped themselves, restricting their potations

to the very modest allowance of a single bottle of Bordeaux, a fact which speaks volumes for their temperance, and honesty.

We found the Victoria very clean and comfortable, in spite of its cramped premises, and everything, that constant civility and attention on the part of the landlord, Mr. Du Moulin (a Frenchman, who speaks English remarkably well), and his son, could contribute to our comfort, was most willingly rendered.

By way of repose after the fatigue of the last week, it was a never-failing amusement, to watch from the windows of our sitting-room, which fronted the Exchange and Commercial Square, the various phases of national costume and physiognomy, presenting themselves in ceaseless change on this spot of neutral ground between East, and West, where Europe, and Africa exchange greetings and merchandise, in lieu of the hostility and hard knocks, of former ages.

Sometimes it would be a regiment of dear old red-coats marching past, as Englishmen only *can* march, with "all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war," colours flying, music playing—a sight, that ever sent a strange thrill through the heart, filling it with an

almost overpowering sense of thankfulness for the privilege of calling Old England "Home." Scarcely have the clang of cymbals, and the fife's shrill notes died away in the distance, ere the scene is re-peopled, and the eye lights upon a motley crowd of sailors,—passengers by the last steamer from England, rushing about furiously in search of "lions,"—grooms, and other belongings of the stable, productions of unmistakable English growth,—a Frenchman or two, out of temper, and cynical (a chronic state of mind, it struck me, from what I daily observed at the *table d'hôte*, with French visitors at Gibraltar)—Spaniards, cloaked as usual,—with a sprinkling of non-descripts, of no particular calling, or country. Africa too sent its contingent to that motley crowd, in the shape of Jews from Morocco by the score clothed in a most becoming costume of skull-cap, belted gaberdine of dark blue, and white drawers, some of the wearers having long flowing beards, others being "shaven and shorn," some bare-legged, others in clean white stockings. The next instant your eye is caught by the approach of an Arab, in turban of scarlet and white, with a long silk tassel drooping over his shoulder, snowy burnous, and loose trousers ;

while Hebrew women, with face half-veiled, and flowing robes of brightest hue, remind you of the recent expulsion of Jews from Morocco, an event that has added to the already-teeming population of Gibraltar some thousands of involuntary immigrants. When I further mention, that right opposite stands a man selling superb scarfs of crimson, and cloth of gold, the *tableau vivant* cannot be said to lack either variety of character, or the necessary ingredient of colour.

The "Ceylon," we found, was expected on Tuesday, and as she is said to economize about 500 tons of fuel every voyage, since the adoption of some new invention in her engine-room, so as to be no longer obliged to coal at Gibraltar, it behoved us to be all ready for her arrival, (generally taking place about midnight), as she is off again in two hours!

Meanwhile a multiplicity of business had to be transacted. There were Purkiss' accounts, documents of considerable size and most perplexing intricacy, including, as they did, all the bills incurred on the road, together with the expenditure of the various sums given out from time to time by Lord Portarlington and Mr. Sykes. These I undertook to examine, and reduce to some sort of order, a business that

occupied the whole of Tuesday, during which time I felt myself to be acting the part of an executor winding-up the affairs of the defunct expedition.

Then Mr. Sykes had his horse to sell, which turned out a very easy matter; for in spite of the long journey, his Madrid purchase was set down by the *cognoscenti* in horse-flesh, as the finest and most powerful animal seen at Gibraltar for many a long day, having greatly improved in condition, since we first started from Toledo.

Altogether we had no lack of occupation during our short stay at "the Rock," and when Tuesday evening came, the steamer's arrival being imminent every moment, several things were still left undone.

Most passengers by the P. & O.'s boats prefer going on board a hulk anchored about a mile out in the bay, the night before, there to await the arrival of the steamer, which does not approach the town nearer than this point. As, however, the Governor, Sir W. Codrington, had given Lord Portarlington an order, enabling our party to go out at any hour of the night, we were all very glad to stay at the Hotel, Mr. Du Moulin having arranged with a set of boat-

men to row us to the steamer immediately on her arrival, an event which would be made known far and near, by the firing of a gun. The greater part of our baggage was already on board the hulk, and we retained merely what we wanted for the night.

Before bed-time we bade good-bye to Marcos and Tomas, who were returning home with their well-earned gains, amounting altogether to more than £100, a little fortune for the two men, who, on the whole, had served our party with so much efficiency and trustworthiness. We felt rather anxious about their homeward journey, extending over that long tract of country between Gibraltar and Toledo, with so large a sum of money on their persons, and it was a great satisfaction to us all to hear, two months after reaching England, that they had, in due course, re-entered the bosom of their families, safe and sound, highly delighted with an expedition, which had so widely enlarged their knowledge of geography and mankind, and furnished them with stories for the remainder of their days.

In fear, and trembling did we go to bed, on Tuesday night, not knowing what moment the gun, notifying the "Ceylon's" arrival, might

not be heard. Hours sped away, while we slept on, thankful for the enjoyment of such good beds; midnight came, then two, and three o'clock, to find us still asleep; when just as the town-clocks were on the point of striking four—BANG! boomed forth on the seaward side, awaking us three at the same instant. I was up at once, knowing from the hour, it must be a signal from the steamer, and not the usual morning gun, which would not be fired till after five. Hurrying on a few clothes, I rushed out into the passage on my way to call the servants (who, worn out with the greater amount of hardship they had undergone, were not likely to have heard the signal), only to find myself anticipated in that intention; and it proved as much as all three of us could accomplish to wake up Purkiss, Swainson, and Elfick, while they lay with their door bolted, immoveable as the Seven Sleepers, being perfectly audible to us, though it was a long time before we, in turn, succeeded in making ourselves audible to them.

The boatmen were now thundering at the back-door, and between noises in-doors, and noises out, added to the apprehension of the steamer's going off without us, my shaving that morning was a rather nervous operation. Pur-

kiss was not going to leave till next day, taking Malaga on his way back to Madrid, and as he had nothing to pack up, while his companions had many things to arrange, I naturally expected he would soon make his appearance, wishing to settle one or two little matters with him before parting. I waited however in vain, and the servants being now ready, while the boatmen insisted that we should be too late if we delayed any longer, we had just reached the street on our way to the boat, when Purkiss appeared at the door, arrayed in very scanty apparel, and holding in his hands five bottles of wine, the last relics of our provision-store, while, in faint accents of farewell, he exclaimed, "Good-bye, my Lord, good-bye!" and thus we left him, "The Last Man" of our pleasant expedition, and residuary possessor of the five bottles of wine, the panniers, and all the sundry articles belonging to the Commissariat, with which he had so often, and so well, ministered to our necessities.

CHAPTER XLIX.

HORROR-STRUCK at the idea of encumbering ourselves at that moment with such unnecessary impediments to speed, as Purkiss with his usual honesty had urged us to take on board, by way of provision for the voyage, I begged and entreated no more time should be lost, feeling assured, that from what we had heard the night before at the office, the steamer's departure must now be drawing unpleasantly near, and it would take us at least half an hour to get on board. So we hurried on through the darkness towards "the Ragged-Staff Stairs," the point specified in the Governor's order for our exit from the jealously-guarded fortress, none of the usual ways being open until after gun-fire.

The turning-out of the guard, the flashing of the lanterns reflected in the still waters of the moat, and the lowering of one drawbridge after another to give us passage, produced quite a

scenic effect, imparting an air of mystery and romance to our departure from the shores of that country, where every village recalls the illusions of a drama, and the commonest peasant appears like a character on the Stage.

Lucky indeed did it prove, we had delayed no longer. The steamer was in the very act of starting, and, as the purser told us on reaching the deck, three minutes more would have seen our luggage on its way ashore, entailing upon us the delay of a whole fortnight for the next boat, and condemning us eventually to spend Christmas Day on the bosom of the Bay of Biscay! So delighted were we to have caught the steamer, that hardly a demur was made (had there been time indeed to make it) to the boatmen's almost incredible demand of £2 10*s.* for conveying ourselves, and our baggage (at two trips) on board! So that from our first contact with Spaniards, in the Spanish Consul's office at Bayonne, down to the moment we quitted the coast at Gibraltar, the national greed for money was maintained with a uniformity and consistency of character, which, Horace himself would own, satisfied all the requirements of the most rigid dramatic propriety.

CHAPTER L.

AS soon as daylight, ushered in by a sunrise that encircled "the Rock" with a halo of glory, enabled us to distinguish objects, we were delighted with our first impressions of the "Ceylon." Everything about her wore so trim and cleanly an appearance, and her proportions were so roomy and spacious, that we anticipated a very comfortable passage, while the commander, Captain Evans, had, even to my unnautical eyes, that look of a thorough sailor, which at once inspired confidence in his seamanship.

And then the breakfast-table! What a spectacle to gladden the eyes of three hungry travellers from Spain! What a transition from the meagre diet of the last two months, to the piles of food, drawn from every region of edibles,—(beasts of the field, birds of the air)—

except the fishes of the sea, which being never so far off from man's table, as when (apparently) nearest, contributed nothing to the provisioning of the "Ceylon." After the fare, on which we had thankfully sustained life through the wilds of Estremadura, and the mountain-valleys of Andalusia, it was positively frightful to observe, how many things are required by Englishmen at sea, where eating becomes the principal occupation of the day, for the complete supply of a single meal. A Scotch breakfast used once to be regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of matutinal feasting; but after what I saw in the "Ceylon," it must stand among my settled convictions, that in point of weight and substance, a P. and O. *déjeuner* takes rank at the head of such repasts, all over the civilized world.

Accustomed to meals few and far between, it seemed to us, as if eating and drinking on board continued, off and on, the whole day, and we were quite in circumstances to appreciate so remarkable a transition from our recent experience.

At six, our very attentive Steward (who by one of those coincidences of travel, that have now ceased to surprise me, had been a brother-

clergyman's servant, in the next parish, at home) used to bring us some tea, and bread and butter, by way of preparative for breakfast at nine, when (according to the poetical fiction of public-dinner reporters) "the tables groaned under all the delicacies of the season," some of them being of a very substantial description. Beefsteaks and kidneys; broiled bacon, grilled fowl, curry, mutton-chops, boar's head and brawn; ham, boiled beef and roast; ranged in long line up and down the tables; flanked by muffins, toast, French rolls, huge loaves of a home-baked aspect that went to our very hearts! Not to speak of the liberal-sized cups, out of which Englishmen are wont to quaff their morning Bohea.

This meal, taking place at nine, was expected to support nature until twelve, when bread and cheese, biscuits and pale ale, appeared on the table, inviting general attention, and, sooth to say, receiving it to a very liberal extent. Dinner, the next act on this gastronomic stage, followed at three P.M., transcending so utterly my feeble powers of expression, that I will not attempt to describe its myriad attractions. The nearest approach to the actual suggested by my prosaic imagination, would be to say,

that it was rather more than the breakfast multiplied by two.

Being one of those ill-starred persons to whom, in the evening, tea or coffee is a poison fatal to sleep, I felt no personal interest in the next act of eating and drinking, occurring somewhere about seven, and much patronized by the ladies. At nine o'clock, wine and spirits made their appearance on the festive board, with a congenial accompaniment of hot and cold water, sugar and biscuits, to fortify the mind against the terrors of a night at sea, and every one helped himself as freely and frequently as he chose.

From this dietary of the "Ceylon" (which is said to be quite paralleled by the commissariat of her sister-ships), it may safely be concluded, that as long as the present *régime* continues, passengers on board the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steam-ships are in no imminent peril of starvation.

One thing, however, struck us as an anomaly. Swainson had been a passenger by some of those boats on more than one previous occasion, and it was chiefly in consequence of the terms in which he described the excellence of their accommodations, that we decided to return to England by one of them, instead of taking the French steam-

ers plying along the east coast to Marseilles, as originally proposed ; and our informant seemed to feel, while we were roughing it up and down the country, that the comforts of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamer from Gibraltar would abundantly make up for any amount of present privation.

When once we had fairly settled on board, I naturally inquired of him how they got on in that part of the ship, fully expecting to hear they had everything they could require, more especially in the way of eating and drinking. I was very sorry to hear a totally different report, which showed that the treatment of the two classes of passengers on board was "wide as the poles asunder." Had I not known the contentedness of his disposition, I might have fancied his report had been coloured by some of the fastidiousness imputed to English servants generally ; not to mention that after Spain the plainest fare, properly cooked, and in sufficient quantity, would have appeared both to him and Elfick a sumptuous feast. Such a disproportion in accommodation cannot be accounted for by the difference of the passage-money, which was but £4, the first-class fare from Gibraltar to Southampton being £13, and the second £9.

This was the only cause of complaint we observed on board the "Ceylon," and though it did not affect any of us in the saloon, yet we could not feel indifferent about the comfort of those, who were always ministering to ours.

There were passengers enough, from every part of the East, to give animation to the scene, without any necessity for that overcrowding so unpleasant to landsmen. The contingent contributed by India to swell our numbers contained, among many others, the sole survivor of the Cabul massacre, Dr. Brydone, who was now returning to England, a hale-looking man, on the completion of his full term of service; while a Victoria Cross won at the Peiho by another of the passengers, reminded us of a still more recent disaster inflicted on the British arms. There were besides, several officers returning home after the suppression of the mutiny, one of whom, a Lieutenant in the Artillery, had for several days been in such extreme danger, that the doctor belonging to the ship assured me he could not possibly outlive twenty-four hours, a prediction happily falsified by his landing alive at Southampton, and ultimate recovery, on returning to his native air in Devonshire.

Military men are supposed not to care much for the ministrations of a clergyman, during sickness; though the incidents of the Crimean war, and many other recent proofs of a like nature, serve to show, that however correct such an opinion may once have been, a very great change has taken place of late years, among all grades in the army. Still, it was almost with as much surprise, as satisfaction, that immediately on going on board, I found my arrival welcomed by more than one of the invalid's brother-officers, who requested me with much earnestness to go and visit him in my ministerial capacity, there being no other clergyman of the Church of England in the ship. I need not say how willingly I complied with their wishes, and after my long and delightful holiday (which I owe to the kindness of one of the best friends any man can be blessed with), it seemed a very appropriate return to pastoral work, to do the little I could in ministering to the awful realities of what then appeared to be a death-bed.

It was with far less satisfaction, than I had experienced amid the stillness of that small cabin, where there was nothing to distract the mind from the thoughts most befitting the hour

of prayer, that, according to Captain Evans' request, I celebrated Divine Service in the well-filled saloon, the following Sunday. Few of the Laity, I suppose, can have the smallest conception, how extremely painful it is to a Clergyman to observe tokens of irreverence and inattention during the ministrations of the sanctuary ; while, on the other hand, nothing gives a more powerful impulse to his own devotions, than to feel that the whole congregation is really uniting with him in the act of worship, both outwardly with their bodies, and inwardly with their souls.

This satisfaction it was not my happiness to enjoy on Sunday, December the 18th, in the saloon of the "Ceylon." No doubt, a church is infinitely better calculated to create and sustain devout aspirations, than the cabin of a well-filled steamer, with its incongruous associations, and undevotional aspect ; nor would any sane person, having the option, prefer such a spot for public worship, to a building dedicated expressly to the glory of God, and harmonizing in all its features with so high a destination. Yet surely it is no valid reason for refusing to do one's best to worship God in spirit, and in truth, because we cannot always have the place best qualified for the purpose ; nor would such a man as St.

Paul (we may well believe) consider that professing Christians are, at any time, exempted from the plain duty of worshipping God both with the body, and with the soul, merely because they may chance now and then, to have to perform their public devotions elsewhere than in a regular church. Indeed, do not both common sense and habit alike, teach us the propriety of *kneeling* always at prayer; for who, ever, thinks of *sitting* down by his bedside to pray, instead of “meekly kneeling on his knees?”

The congregation, however, to which it was my lot to minister on board the “Ceylon,” seemed to hold a very different opinion; at any rate its practice was painfully diverse, and not one that I saw, *knelt* during any portion of the service, sitting through the whole, Litany and all, with as complaisant an unconsciousness, as if nothing could be more becoming than their behaviour, nay, almost as if kneeling were an act to be abhorred of all good Christians! What happened in other parts of the saloon, farther off, I cannot tell. There was quite enough to give me pain in my own immediate neighbourhood, and I hope I may not soon have the distress of witnessing such an utter want of devotion in any congregation, either at

home, or abroad, as I observed on that occasion.

Considering the time of year (to make a transition from that painful subject to the one most resorted to by Englishmen in moments of embarrassment), the weather was quite as good as could be expected during a winter-voyage, the Bay of Biscay giving us abundant proof, however, that its reputation for storm and tempest, is by no means undeserved, though we three were fortunate enough to have found berths (Mr. Sykes, and I pairing in one cabin) on the lee-side of the vessel, which saved us from many a shock in crossing the Bay.

Sunday saw us off Ushant, to be steaming up the Channel, ere darkness closed around us, and we "turned in" with the pleasant expectation of looking once more on the Hampshire coast by the morrow's light.

For more than twenty years I have not passed such a night, as the last we spent on board the "Ceylon." Cabin-doors slammed; heavy-booted feet overhead stamped; neighbour-passengers were smoking, drinking and singing; or packing, cording, and hammering their boxes, to such a degree as made one long to be doing something of the sort oneself, since the proper

purpose, for which bed is intended, had become so hopelessly impossible. Other passengers too, though taking no part in these noisier occupations, were almost as great enemies to repose, going about as they did, up and down, sometimes on deck, sometimes below, like people troubled with a protracted fit of the "fidgets." The whole scene vividly recalled "breaking up" at school, when scores of boys used to go streaming about in all the ecstasy of approaching holidays, and full of the marvellous deeds to be done at home, having nothing particular to do, except that of running in everybody's way, and worrying out of all patience the poor distracted servants.

Monday morning revealed to us a white world, the shores of Southampton Water being covered with snow, while, still descending in dense flakes, it lay on the deck to the depth of several inches, casting over every object an air of utter discomfort and wretchedness that made one shiver, after all the sunshine of the South, to meet with so chilling a reception on first landing in Old England.

So much ice had formed around the gates, that it became a very tedious business to get the "Ceylon" to her proper place inside the dock;

while, with the usual impatience of steamer-passengers, we stood, cold and miserable, on deck, almost within arm's length of land, long before we could possibly go ashore to take refuge and get some breakfast, at Radley's Hotel.

I have landed from the Continent at several of our principal ports,—London, Dover, Folkestone, and Newhaven, undergoing at each the ordeal of the Custom-House. But I must say, that in strict conscientiousness, and rigorous discharge of duty to their Queen, and country, the Southampton officers stand pre-eminent, and I am willing to render all honour to their virtue. Yet I hope it will never again be my fate to land there from any foreign port.

Coming from Gibraltar, the last point touched at by the "Ceylon," we stood of course last on the list, and thus having to wait till the baggage of every passenger (many of whom were ladies!) from Singapore, Hong Kong, the whole of India, Australia, Aden, Egypt, and Malta, had been carefully examined, it was nearly five o'clock P.M. on the 19th of December ere we were finally released, enabling us to set off for our different destinations, happy and thankful to be once more in England, though still happier

in the prospect of being soon re-united to dear friends, while we cast many a retrospect of satisfaction and enjoyment, on the various vicissitudes and adventures of our "Autumn Tour in Spain."

THE END.



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